21.—R. P. A. CHEAP REPRINTS.

A NEW TRANSLATION, by W. G. Hutchison **6D.**

THE APOSTLES

ERNEST RENAN

[ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED]

WATTS & Co.,
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

No. 22 of this Series will be "PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE," by S. LAING

THE APOSTLES

THE APOSTLES

BY

ERNEST RENAN

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM G. HUTCHISON

[ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED]

WATTS & CO.,
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.
1905

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

"The Apostles" was published in 1866, forming the second volume of the series which had begun three years previously with the *Life of Jesus*. These three years had been years of wordy assault, now mainly of antiquarian interest, and the coldest of cold controversy—years in which the author of the notorious fifth Gospel faced an unparalleled flight of articles, books, pamphlets, and episcopal pastorals. The majority of these missiles are no doubt quite unreadable by this time, judging from certain specimens which I have examined; but some of the titles as given by Milsand[1] are suggestive. There is the democratic appeal of a M. Baubil, for instance, *Vive Jésus! L'Appel au Peuple du Manifeste Déicide de M. Renan;* others are more loftily disdainful, *M. Renan et son Roman du Jour* and *Leçon préliminaire à M. Renan sur la Vie de Jésus;* yet others hint scandal, like *Renan en Famille: Révélations curieuses;* there is even extant a ditty (set to the immortal air of "We won't go home till morning"), entitled *L'Évangéliste Renan*, which was printed at Algiers in 1863.

Under the onslaught of this motley multitude Renan maintained a dignified silence, only broken by the still more dignified *apologia* in the Introduction to the present work. Such a storm he has expected; religious controversy is bound by its very nature to be embittered, partial, unscrupulous. For his part he is no controversialist; all with which he is concerned is the reconstruction and explanation of the past, in the light of history and the emotional needs of the human race. It is no business of his to shake the faith of simple believers; he aims at being an historian, and "one cannot be at once a good controversialist and a good historian." There is no questioning the candour and sincerity of this personal avowal, and it supplies a clue to the curious situation that Renan is a red rag to the more aggressive bulls of orthodoxy and rationalism alike. There is no need to dwell on his irritating effect upon the former; but what is the disillusioned positivist, viewing everything in the dry light of actualities, to make of a man who sweeps away the whole supernatural machinery of the Resurrection, yet a page or two onward proclaims its mystical truth and exalts an hysterical woman as, after Jesus, the most potent founder of the faith of Europe? Is such rapturous enthusiasm over hallucinations quite worthy of a serious historian? So this matter-of-fact person will ask, and he will be little less virtuously indignant over Renan's programme for the cleric who has

[1] Milsand's bibliography of French works on the *Life of Jesus* from July, 1863, to June, 1864, comprises no less than 205 different items.

sloughed his theological beliefs. Unless he be one of the elect, like Colenso, he must say nothing about it, go on preaching the old dogmas which for him are hollow unrealities, and finally subside with his "poetic reservations, angelic silences" into a "discreet tomb." "Theory is not practice. The ideal must remain the ideal; it must fear the soilure of contact with reality"—thus Renan's summing-up of the case; and one can imagine his critic asking of what use is an ideal which shrinks from the actual, from the every-day conditions of an every-day world.

To those, however, who approach our historian sympathetically, who are willing he should be what his temperament has made him, who are not impatient of apparent contradiction, his occasional "sweet unreasonableness"—to reverse a phrase of Matthew Arnold's—is not without its charm. The plain man, the cool and matter-of-fact observer, has his uses; but he is handicapped for the understanding of those more credulous and emotional fellow-creatures whose lot it was to travail with and bring forth the religions of the world. M. Anatole France has aptly set forth Renan's qualifications for writing the history of a faith.[1] For such a task he had to have a critical sense ever on the alert, a scepticism capable of defying all the stratagems of believers and their candour more potent than their stratagems. But, with this, it was also essential that he should have a keen appreciation of the divine, a secret instinct for the needs of the human heart, and, as it were, an objective piety. Such a double nature was to be found in Renan; without himself believing, he had the knack of catching all the subtlest shades of popular belief. "If you will understand me properly," says M. France, "I shall say that faith in no respect possesses him, but that he possesses faith."

The qualities detailed above are no less exhibited in the present volume than in the others of the *Origins of Christianity;* and another quality, that of power to sustain the reader's interest, is manifest throughout. This narration of the first twelve years of the new religion has the charm at once of sympathy and keen discerning, research and ingenious conjecture, pathos and epigram. On these there is no need to enlarge, nor on the fascination of the style, which even a translation cannot wholly suppress. It would be more to the purpose to note a few points on which the most advanced textual criticism has had its say since Renan's time. The discussion of texts and internal evidence always involves great prolixity; but my notes must be brief and unsupported by the condensed but extensive evidence characteristic of that monument of modern criticism, the *Encyclopædia Biblica.* I am mainly indebted to Mr. P. W. Schmiedel, Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the University of Zürich, who is the chief contributor on topics of the early apostolic age.

Renan's principal authority for his work is the book of *Acts.* Its legendary character, the first twelve chapters especially, makes great caution in its use necessary; yet to reject it altogether, he says, would be uncritical, and so we find its information used throughout the book.[1] There is general agreement

[1] *La Vie Littéraire*, p. 233.

[1] In the following translation all New Testament quotations have been collated with the revised version of the English Bible, and references given.

among critics that the *Acts*, with all its inaccuracies and self-contradictions, is a "tendency" document; that the author, whoever he may have been, was a writer with a purpose, and had a very obvious intention of showing concord, where there was actually discord, between Paul and the Judaistic Christians. According to the Tübingen school, the *Acts* was an attempt from the Pauline side to make Judaistic Christianity recognise Gentile Christianity, in view of the dangers looming ahead of Gnosticism and State persecution. Schmiedel conjectures the author's aim to be the justification of the Gentile Christianity of his time, already shaping for Catholicism, by means of an account of Christian origins in which the Apostles, Paul included, play the part of founders, and in which all are represented as being of one heart and soul. The author, as Renan also notices, is well-disposed towards the Romans: "The very last word thus says something favourable to the Romans, and, in order not to efface this impression, the writer leaves the death of Paul unmentioned."[1] Who, then, was this would-be reconciler? The one thing certain is that he also wrote the third Gospel. Renan adheres on this point to the traditional attribution to Luke. But Schmiedel is by no means so assured; he does not consider it possible that the "we" sections, the journey record, are by the same writer as the rest, and concludes that these sections came from a document by an eye-witness which was used by a later writer, the compiler of the whole book. From his retaining the "we" the inevitable inference is that he wished—what actually occurred—the whole book to be deemed the work of one man.[1] But was Luke the writer of even the journey record? Schmiedel, admitting the possibility of Luke's authorship—despite the suspicious fact that, while Luke was apparently uncircumcised (Col. iv. 11–14), the writer of the record uses Jewish dates, goes to the synagogue and teaches there—says, "we must perhaps abandon all attempt to ascribe the Journey Record to any known companion of Paul."[2]

As regards the date of *Acts*, Renan, proceeding on the assumption of Luke's authorship, tentatively assigns it to about the year 80; but Schmiedel offers the choice of two later dates. The divergence between the third Gospel and the *Acts* in the matter of the Ascension of Jesus—which in the Gospel takes place on the evening of the Resurrection, in *Acts* forty days later—indicates that the Gospel was the earlier writing; for the lengthened sojourn on earth argues a significant development of the idea already at work in the third Gospel, that, before his Ascension, Jesus must have continued on earth to have intercourse with his disciples and instruct them.[3] The date of the third Gospel is generally put after 70, so *Acts* must have been written some years later, the surest datum being the author's acquaintance with the works of Josephus, who published nothing before 79. Finally, Schmiedel concludes that *Acts* must be placed somewhere between 105 and 130, or, if the third Gospel already presuppose acquaintance with all the writings of Josephus, between 110 and 130.

[1] Article "Acts," *Ency. Bib.*, vol. i., p. 42.

[1] For Renan's explanation of the retention of "we" see p. 16.

[2] *Ency. Bib.*, vol. i., p. 44.

[3] Renan also dwells on this development of legend (see pp. 18–19).

I have already made passing reference to Renan's treatment of the Resurrection. Out of the tangled and contradictory mass of traditions he has, with great psychological insight, constructed an account of the alleged miraculous phenomena, which, pending further progress in psychical research, may be considered as a good working hypothesis. No one can deny that, under certain circumstances, persons of a certain temperament see apparitions. These apparitions are subjective, no doubt; but this does not make them any the less real to the seer, and, after all, it is only he who matters. "Appearances of the risen Jesus did actually occur," says Schmiedel; "that is to say, the followers of Jesus really had the impression of having seen him. The historian who will have it that the alleged appearances are due merely to legend or invention must deny not only the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles, but also the historicity of Jesus altogether."[1] Both, it might be remarked in passing, have been denied.[2] Schmiedel will not accept the empty tomb; it is, he says, quite unhistorical, though ingenious theories have been imagined, such as the disappearance of the body through a chasm opened below the sepulchre by the earthquake mentioned in Matt. xxviii. 2, and Renan's fancy, a peculiarly characteristic one for him, that Mary Magdalene may have had a share in the removal, because only a woman's hand would have left the clothes so neatly folded.[3] Schmiedel's final pronouncement on the matter may be quoted:—"For all that has been said in the foregoing paragraphs the most that can be claimed is that it proves the possibility—the probability if you will—of the explanation from subjective visions. From the very nature of the case it would not be possible to prove more, for the visionary character of the appearances could not be established for us by the visionaries themselves—on the contrary, everything constrained them to regard what they had seen as objective and real—nor yet by the reporters, who simply repeated what the visionaries had related to them. Only scientifically-trained reporters could have assured us on the point, and such reporters did not then exist.....The hypothesis, furthermore, attributes no want of uprightness either to the visionary or to the reporter. The error which it points out merely affects the husk—namely, that the risen Jesus was seen in objective reality—but not the kernel of the matter, that Jesus lives in the spiritual sense."[1]

Renan gives an interesting account of the oldest of the Christian Churches, that of Jerusalem. It may be questioned, however, whether its communism were quite so strict as he implies. It seems to have been rather an unwritten law than a tightly-drawn regulation, that all adherents should realise their property and hand over the entire proceeds to the corporate Church. Peter, according to *Acts* v. 4, tells Ananias that he was free to retain his property or the money he received for it; his sin was lying to the Holy Ghost. Of another feature of the Church of Jerusalem, its so-called "gift of tongues," this work provides as satisfactory a discussion as is possible of

[1] Article "Resurrection and Ascension Narratives," *Ency. Bib.*, vol. iv., p. 4061.

[2] For the former see article "Paul," by Prof. W. C. van Manen, *Ency. Bib.*, vol. iii., p. 3620; for the latter the writings of Mr. J. M. Robertson.

[3] See p. 44.

[1] *Ency. Bib.*, vol. iv., p. 4085.

an obscure subject which has inspired unending controversies and innumerable treatises. The great body of critical opinion agrees with him that what Paul calls "speaking with tongues" was the mumbled ravings of persons in a state of cerebral ecstasy, principally of the nature of prayer, praise, and prophecy, and unintelligible to ordinary hearers. The mythical Pentecost story in the *Acts* (explained in the present work by a convenient lightning storm) has, says Schmiedel, forced a wrong interpretation on what Paul says in 1 Cor. xiv., by which the Apostles are supposed to have suddenly and supernaturally acquired the power to speak foreign languages. This was the theory of the Fathers (St. Augustine went one better by claiming that each Apostle could talk all languages), and it has remained the popular belief ever since.

The lightning storm, so useful to the naturalistic explainer-away, is also tentatively suggested by Renan as a concomitant cause of Paul's vision on the way to Damascus. His version of the incident may be described as a very ingenious and plausible one; it inspired, however, the wrath of an early Nonconformist critic of the *Apostles*, a Mr. Henry Rogers,[1] who apparently would have had history confined rigorously to the bare statements of what he would call the inspired narrative—a narrative so inspired that it is inconsistent in its details of the vision.[2] Mr. Rogers is highly indignant that Renan should not only indicate Paul's probable route from Jerusalem, which seems on the face of it a harmless thing to do, but that he should have the audacity to attempt an analysis of the Apostle's mental state at the time. Who is Renan that he should ascribe remorse and forebodings to Paul before the crisis? he asks. But had Mr. Rogers been a psychologist instead of a theological special pleader, he would have recognised our historian's insight and sound sense in inferring a period of uneasiness and misgiving for Paul, leading up to his change of opinions.[1] He is a poor historian who does not attempt with the evidence at his command to fathom the motives and tendencies of his characters. Apart from his sudden *volte face*, there is little concerning Paul in this volume. It concludes on the eve of his setting forth on his world-mission, which is treated in the third book of the *Origins*. Paul, it must be confessed, was not a saint after Renan's own heart; indeed, he grudges him the name of saint at all. "The dominant feature in his character was not loving-kindness. He was proud, unbending, determined. He stood on his defence—to use the current phrase, asserted himself; he used strong language, believed himself absolutely in the right, stuck to his own opinions, embroiled himself with

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, vol. v., p. 513.

[2] Cf. *Acts* ix. 7, xxii. 9, xxvi. 12–18.

[1] I have no wish to accuse Renan of plagiarism, but it is interesting to note that he was anticipated in this theory by Thomas De Quincey in his *Essay on Secret Societies*, from which I quote the following: "The countenance of St. Stephen, when the great chorus was even then arising—'Stone him to death!'—shone like the countenance of an angel. That countenance, bringing down to earth some revelation of a brightness in the sky, the fountains of which were intercepted to Paul, perplexed him; haunted him sleeping, troubled him when awake.....Upon this we may be sure that Paul brooded intensely; that the effect, noticed as so often occurring at martyrdoms, was already commencing in *him;* and probably that the noonday scene on the road to Damascus did but quicken and antedate a result which would at any rate have followed in the end." —*Works* (1862), vol. vi., pp. 287–88.

others."[1] Worst of all, Paul had never had personal intercourse with Jesus, which put him below the least inspired of the original Apostles in primitive Christian ideas and apparently in Renan's. Indeed, the latter considers that, had Paul met Jesus in his lifetime, it is doubtful whether he would have adhered to him at all. Yet Paul is—reluctantly perhaps—allowed his rights; but for him Christianity would have flickered out in an obscure Jewish sect like the Essenes; it is he who has given it a universal scope.

One of the most interesting chapters is devoted to some of the religious movements parallel with Christianity, in particular to that of Simon of Gitta. Yet it touches but a fringe of the subject. For Simon of Gitta, or Simon Magus as he is usually called, is one of the stock historical mysteries, a kind of ancient "Man in the Iron Mask," about whom research has piled up a huge mass of evidence and conjecture. We meet him in at least three forms (a fourth, his identification with Felix's pandar, is probably erroneous). First, we have Simon as the Samaritan magician mentioned once in *Acts*, treating the inspired gifts of the Apostles as tricks of the trade which he would fain acquire; secondly, there is Simon, an early Gnostic, founder of the sect of Simonians and alleged author of *The Great Announcement;* thirdly, the Simon who figures in certain ancient Christian writings — the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, for instance, has features which, says Schmiedel, are unquestionably derived from Paul and plainly show him to be a caricature of that Apostle. There was, of course, much polemic on the part of his brethren in the Church against Paul, both in his lifetime and after his death. Schmiedel goes so far as to conjecture that he is "the enemy" in the wheat and tares parable (Matt. xiii. 24). There is small probability that the Simonian problem will ever be completely cleared up. As Renan remarks, his was a common name, and the pretension to magic powers was not less common among his contemporaries.

The last few chapters of the *Apostles* are in some respects the most satisfactory. We are here on solid ground, unhampered by the misty vapour of legend and myth. Renan does what he has the gift to do—provides an admirable general view of the Roman world, at the epoch when the East was gradually creeping on to the conquest of the West. He might have easily made his survey more minute, he might have multiplied details till the wood was invisible for the trees; but he has preferred a picturesque presentment on broad lines, which has, nevertheless, a wealth of vivid illustration from manners, laws, literature, and religion. The Roman Empire had grown to be a world empire; there was a no less irresistible drift to a world religion. Monotheism was, so to speak, in the air, and the Westward flow of Oriental emigrants favoured its assimilation. One form of Monotheism, Judaism, had its converts; but Judaism was too national, too exclusive, to be attractive. Judeo-Christianity was in no better case; it appealed neither to Jew nor Gentile, the former being loth to abandon the rites sanctified by tradition, the latter to submit to purely Eastern institutions. The wider Christianity which we associate with Paul was obviously the winning cause, though even

[1] *St. Paul*, p. 567.

Christianity made its way but slowly, and was profoundly modified by Western ideas.

It had much in its favour; first and foremost, the actual existence of the Empire, with its *Pax Romana* stilling internecine conflict, with its splendid means of communication which made travel easier than it ever was again until comparatively recent years; a governing authority which, on the whole, was tolerant; a decaying national religion which was but a husk without a kernel; a credulous delight in the marvellous and exotic; a generally diffused idea that a new reformation was essential; a democratic longing for social brotherhood. Even though in mutual conflict, philosophy and the new religion had some ideals in common, and, in the result, Christianity evolved into an adaptation fitted to its Western environment by acquired characteristics, quite foreign to the early Apostles of whom we read at the beginning of this book.

It was a habit of Renan's to conclude the volumes of his *Origins* with some personal speculations of a paradoxical kind, which must sometimes have caused the unsophisticated reader to rub his eyes and wonder what the elusive genius of the author would be at. The moral of the last few pages of the *Apostles* would seem to be that, while the modern man has emerged from the rigidity of ideas which made the great religious conflagrations of the past possible, the world is still under the dominance of devout ancestors, whose absolute faith is the only faith that can impose its sway upon others. The success of a religion has nothing to do with the plausibility of its proofs; its success is in ratio to what it says to the heart of man. Is religion, then, in this highly enlightened age, destined to dwindle away like popular superstitions about witchcraft and magic? Not at all, says Renan; religion is not a popular error, it is a great instinctive truth which the people perceives and expresses. The more highly developed the race, the more religion it will have. In a humanity ten times better than the present, man would be "plunged in a perpetual adoration, rolling from ecstasies to ecstasies, being born, living and dying in a torrent of voluptuous delight." The prospect is exciting, but, personally, I do not find it attractive. Yet let us not be irritated by our author's amazing flights of fancy; he would not be himself without them; they are only "pretty Fanny's way." All the same, one would like to invite him to set down clearly what his working definition of religion really is.

WILLIAM G. HUTCHISON.

London: March, 1905.

CONTENTS

THE APOSTLES

INTRODUCTION: CRITICISM OF THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

The first Book of our *History of the Origins of Christianity* brought events up to the death and burial of Jesus. We must now resume our narrative at the point at which we left it—that is to say, on Saturday, April 4th, in the year 33. For some time it will still be a kind of continuation of the life of Jesus. After the months of joyous intoxication, during which the great founder laid the bases of a new order for mankind, these years were the most decisive of all in the world's history. It is still Jesus who by the sacred fire, the spark of which he has infused in the hearts of a few friends, creates institutions of the highest originality, stirs and transforms souls, and on all impresses his divine seal. We have to show how, under this influence still active and victorious over death, was established faith in the Resurrection, in the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the gift of tongues, and in the power of the Church. We shall describe the organisation of the Church of Jerusalem, its first trials, its first conquests, the earliest missions which set forth from its midst. We shall follow Christianity in its rapid progress in Syria as far as Antioch, at which a second capital is formed, more important in a sense than Jerusalem, and destined to supplant it. In this new centre, where converted pagans form the majority, we shall see Christianity finally sever itself from Judaism and receive a name of its own; above all, we shall behold the birth of that great conception of distant missions destined to bear the name of Jesus into the world of the Gentiles. We shall pause at the solemn moment when Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark set out for the execution of this great scheme. Then we shall interrupt our narrative to cast a glance over the world which the bold missionaries undertake to convert. We shall endeavour to give an account of the intellectual, political, religious, and social state of the Roman Empire about the year 45, the probable date of St. Paul's departure on his first mission.

Such is the subject of this second Book, which we entitle *The Apostles*, because it deals with the period of common action, during which the little family created by Jesus marched in company and was grouped, morally speaking, about a single point, Jerusalem. With our next Book, the third, we shall emerge from this group, and exhibit almost as the solitary figure on the stage the man who, better than any other, represents conquering and travelling Christianity, St. Paul. Although from a certain epoch he may have been given the title of Apostle, Paul did not bear it with the same right as the Twelve;[1] he was a worker of the second hour, and almost an intruder. The state in which the historical documents have come down

[1] The author of the *Acts* does not directly give St. Paul the title of Apostle; as a rule, it is reserved by him for the members of the central college of Jerusalem.

to us occasions a kind of illusion on this point. As we know infinitely more details about Paul than about the Twelve, as we have his own authentic writings and original memoirs of great precision on certain epochs of his life, we ascribe to him an importance of the first order, almost higher than that of Jesus. Therein we err. Paul was a very great man, and played a leading part in the foundation of Christianity. But he is not to be compared either with Jesus, or even with the latter's immediate disciples. Paul never saw Jesus; he did not taste the ambrosia of the Galilean preaching. And the most commonplace man who had had his share of the heavenly manna was, merely thereby, higher than he who had only had the after-taste. There is nothing more misleading than a theory, fashionable in our time, according to which Paul was the true founder of Christianity. The true founder of Christianity was Jesus. The first places after him must be assigned to those great, obscure comrades of Jesus, those passionate and faithful women friends, who believed in him despite of death. Paul was, in the first century, an isolated phenomenon in some measure. He left behind him no organised school; on the contrary, he left ardent opponents who wished, after his death, to banish him from the Church, and put him on the same footing as Simon the Magician. They took from him the repute of what we consider as his special work, the conversion of the Gentiles. The Church of Corinth, which he alone had founded, claimed to owe its origin both to him and St. Peter. In the second century Papias and St. Justin do not mention his name. It was later, when oral tradition was no longer of any account, when the Scriptures took the place of all else, that Paul acquired a primary place in Christian theology. Paul, in fact, had a theology; Peter and Mary Magdalene had not. Paul left considerable works; the writings of the other Apostles cannot rival his, either in importance or in authenticity.

At first sight, the documents for the period covered by this volume are scanty and quite insufficient. Direct evidence reduces itself to the early chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles*—chapters the historical value of which gives room for serious objections. But the light cast on this obscure interval by the last chapters of the Gospels, and, more especially, by the Epistles of St. Paul, slightly dissipates the shadows. An ancient document can serve to give us an acquaintance—first, with the period in which it was written; second, with the period preceding its composition. Every document, indeed, suggests retrospective inductions on the state of the society whence it has sprung. Indited from the year 53 to about the year 62, the Epistles of St. Paul are full of information on the early years of Christianity. As, moreover, we deal here with great foundations lacking precise dates, the essential point is to show the conditions in which they were evolved. On this subject I must remark, once and for all, that the current date at the top of each page is never more than approximate. There are very few fixed data for the chronology of those early years. Nevertheless, thanks to the care taken by the compiler of the *Acts* not to change the order of events; thanks to the Epistle to the Galatians, where there are some numerical indications of the highest value, and to Josephus, who supplies us with the date of events in profane history connected with certain facts concerning the Apostles, we succeed in forming a very plausible ground-work for the history of the latter, in which chances of error float between fairly narrow limits.

I shall repeat at the beginning of this book what I said at the beginning of my *Life of Jesus*. In histories such as this, where the mass alone is certain, and in which nearly all the details lend themselves more or less to doubt by reason of the legendary character of the documents, hypothesis is indispensable. Upon epochs of which we know nothing

there are no hypotheses to be made. The attempt to reproduce some group of ancient statuary, which has certainly existed, but of which we possess no fragments, and on which we have no written information, is an entirely arbitrary task. But what more legitimate than to endeavour to recompose the pediments of the Parthenon with what remains of them, making use of the ancient texts, the designs made in the seventeenth century, of all sources of information; in a word, by finding inspiration in the style of those inimitable fragments, and seeking to grasp their soul and their life? After that we cannot say that we have recovered the masterpiece of the ancient sculptor; but we have done what was possible to approximate to it. Such a process is the more legitimate in history since language permits uncertainties of form, which marble forbids. There is nothing, indeed, to hinder the reader being given his choice between diverse suppositions. The writer's conscience must be tranquil, so soon as he has presented as certain what is certain, as probable what is probable, as possible what is possible. In parts of his work where the foot slips between history and legend, it is the general effect alone that need be pursued. Our third Book, for which we shall have absolutely historical documents, and in which we shall have to paint sharply-defined characters, and relate events clearly set forth, will present a more assured narration. It will be recognised, however, that the general aspect of this period is not known with more certainty. Actual achievements are more eloquent than all biographical details. We know but little of the incomparable artists who created the masterpieces of Greek art. But those masterpieces tell us more than the most circumstantial narratives, the most authentic texts, of the personality of their authors and of the public from which they won appreciation.

The documents for knowledge of the decisive events which took place during the days immediately succeeding the death of Jesus are the concluding chapters of the Gospels, containing the narrative of the appearances of the risen Christ. I need not repeat here what I have said in the introduction to my *Life of Jesus* as to the value of such documents. For this part of the subject we have fortunately a controlling check, too often lacking in the *Life of Jesus*; I refer to an important passage in St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5–8), which establishes—first, the reality of the appearances; second, their long duration, contrary to the narrative of the Synoptic Gospels; third, the variety of places in which they were manifested, contrary to Mark and Luke. The study of this fundamental text, combined with many other reasons, confirms us in the views we have enunciated on the reciprocal relations of the Synoptics and the fourth Gospel. In what concerns the narrative of the resurrection and the appearances, the fourth Gospel maintains the superiority which it has for the rest of the life of Jesus. If we wish an ordered, logical narrative, permitting probable conjecture of what is concealed behind the illusions, it is there we must seek it. I have just touched on the most difficult problem relating to the origins of Christianity: "What is the historical value of the fourth Gospel?" The use which I made of it in my *Life of Jesus* was the point on which enlightened critics had most objections to address to me. Nearly all scholars who apply the rational method to the history of theology reject the fourth Gospel as in every respect apocryphal. I have given much new thought to this problem, and I have been unable to modify materially my first view. However, as I dissent on this point from the general opinion, I have considered it my duty to set forth in detail my motives for persistence. I have made it the subject of an appendix at the end of a revised and corrected edition of the *Life of Jesus*.

The *Acts of the Apostles* is the most important document for the history which we have to relate. I must explain

myself at this point on the character of this work, on its historical value, and on the use which I have made of it.

One thing certain is that the *Acts* had the same author as the third Gospel, and forms a continuation of that Gospel. I need not stop to prove this proposition, which has never been seriously contested. The prefaces which open the two writings, the dedication of one and other to Theophilus, the perfect similarity of style and ideas, furnish abundant demonstration in this matter.

A second proposition, which has not the same certitude, but which, nevertheless, can be regarded as very probable, is that the author of the *Acts* was a disciple of Paul, who accompanied him in many of his journeys. At first sight, this proposition seems indisputable. In many places, from verse 10 of chapter xvi. onwards, the author makes use in his narrative of the pronoun "we," indicating thus that thenceforth he formed part of the apostolic band about Paul. That seems demonstrable. There is, indeed, one way of escape from the force of such an argument, which is the supposition that the passages in which the pronoun "we" are found were copied by the last compiler of the *Acts* from an earlier writing, from the original memoirs of some disciple of Paul, Timothy for example; and that the compiler, by inadvertence, may have forgotten to substitute for "we" the name of the narrator. This explanation is scarcely to be admitted. At most, one would understand such a piece of negligence in a clumsy compilation. But the third Gospel and the *Acts* form a well-written work, composed with reflection, even with art, penned by a single hand and following a regular plan. The two books together form a whole, absolutely the same in style, exhibiting the same favourite modes of speech and the same fashion of quoting Scripture. So flagrant a defect in compilation as that in question would be inexplicable. The inference is therefore inevitable that he who wrote the conclusion of the work wrote the beginning, and that the narrator of the whole was he who said "we" in the passages referred to.

This becomes more striking still if we remark under what circumstances the narrator joins company with Paul. The use of "we" begins at the moment when Paul enters Macedonia for the first time (xvi. 10). It ceases at the moment that Paul leaves Philippi. It recommences when Paul, visiting Macedonia for the last time, passes again through Philippi (xx. 5, 6). Thenceforward the narrator never leaves Paul until the end. If we note, further, that the chapters in which the narrator accompanies the Apostle have a specially precise character, we no longer doubt that the narrator may have been a Macedonian, or rather a Philippian, who preceded Paul to Troas during the second mission, who remained at Philippi on the Apostle's departure, and who, on the Apostle's last passing through that town (third mission), joined him, never to quit him more. How can it be supposed that a compiler, writing at a distance, should have let himself be dominated to such a degree by the memories of another? These memories would make a patch in the whole. The narrator who says "we" would have his own style, his special expressions;[1] he would be more Pauline than the general compiler. But this is not so; the work exhibits perfect homogeneity.

Surprise may perhaps be felt that a thesis apparently so evident should have met contradictors. But New Testament criticism presents many such obvious impressions which, on examination, are found to be full of uncertainty. As regards style, thought, and doctrine, the *Acts* is scarce what would be expected from a disciple of Paul. In no respect does it resemble the latter's Epistles. There is no trace of the haughty doctrines which constitute the originality of

[1] The poverty of expression among the New Testament writers is known to be so great that each has his little vocabulary apart. This is a valuable clue to determine the authorship of even very brief writings.

the Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul's temperament is that of a rigid and egoistic Protestant; the author of the *Acts* gives us the impression of being a good Catholic, docile and optimistic, calling each priest "a holy priest," each bishop "a great bishop," ready to accept all fictions rather than admit that these holy priests and great bishops fall out with one another, and sometimes wage fierce internecine strife. While professing great admiration for Paul, the author of the *Acts* avoids giving him the title of Apostle, and he wishes Peter to have the credit of initiating the conversion of the Gentiles. One would say, in short, that he was a disciple of Peter rather than of Paul. We shall presently show that in two or three cases his conciliatory principles have led him gravely to falsify Paul's biography; he is guilty of inaccuracies, and, above all, of omissions which are truly strange in a disciple of the latter. He does not speak of a single one of his Epistles; he abbreviates in the most surprising fashion statements of the first importance. Even in the part where he must have been Paul's companion, he is sometimes singularly flat, poorly informed, poorly enlightened. Finally, the slackness and vagueness of certain narratives, and their element of conventionality, would make one think of a writer who had no relation direct or indirect with the Apostles, and who was writing about the year 100 or 120.

Need these objections check us? I do not think so, and I persist in believing that the final compiler of the *Acts* was indeed the disciple of Paul who says "we" in the last chapters. All difficulties, however insoluble they may appear, must be, if not dispelled, at least held in suspense by an argument so decisive as that which results from the word "we." It should be added that, by attributing the *Acts* to a companion of Paul, two important peculiarities are explained: on the one hand, the disproportion of the parts of the book, of which more than three-fifths are devoted to Paul; on the other, the disproportion in Paul's biography itself, his first mission being described with great brevity, while certain portions of the second and third missions, especially the last journeys, are related in minute detail. A man entirely foreign to apostolic history would not have had these inequalities. The general plan of his work would have been better conceived. What distinguishes history compiled from documents, from history written wholly or in part at first hand, is precisely lack of proportion; the historian of the study taking the events themselves as the framework of his narrative, the author of memoirs taking as his framework his recollections, or at least his personal relations. An ecclesiastical historian, a kind of Eusebius, writing about the year 120, would have bequeathed to us a book quite differently arranged from chapter xiii. onward. The curious fashion in which the *Acts* at that moment leaves the orbit in which it has so far revolved is, in my opinion, only to be explained by the peculiar position of the author and his relations with Paul. This conclusion will naturally be confirmed if among the known fellow-workers of Paul we find the name of the author to whom tradition ascribes our work.

This is, indeed, what takes place. Both manuscripts and tradition give as the author of the third Gospel a certain *Lucanus* or *Lucas*. From what has been said, it results that, if *Lucas* be really the author of the third Gospel, he is the author of the *Acts* as well. Now, it so happens that we meet this name of Lucas as that of a comrade of Paul, in the Epistle to the Colossians iv. 14; in that to Philemon 24; and in the second to Timothy iv. 11. This last Epistle is of more than dubious authenticity. The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, for their part, though very probably authentic, are not, however, the most unquestionable Epistles of St. Paul. But these writings in any case belong to the first century, and that suffices to prove incontrovertibly that among the disciples of St. Paul there existed a Lucas. The fabricator of the Epistles

to Timothy, in point of fact, is surely not the same as the fabricator of the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (supposing, contrary to our opinion, that the latter are apocryphal). Even to admit that a forger would have given Paul an imaginary companion would be somewhat unreasonable. But assuredly different forgers would not have agreed in hitting on the same name. Two observations give this argument peculiar force. The first is that the name of Lucas or Lucanus is an uncommon name among the first Christians, and does not lend itself to confusions of homonyms; the second is that the Lucas of the Epistles has no celebrity otherwise. There was nothing repugnant to the usages of the time in putting a famous name at the top of a writing, as was done for the second Epistle of Peter, and, very probably, for the Epistles of Paul to Titus and to Timothy. But the inscription at the beginning of a writing of a false name, one moreover quite obscure, is inconceivable. Was the forger's intention to cover the book with the authority of Paul? But, then, why not take the name of Paul himself, or at least the name of Timothy or Titus, much better known as disciples of the Apostle of the Gentiles? Luke had no place in tradition, legend, or history. The three passages cited from the Epistles could not suffice to give him a standing admitted by all. The Epistles to Timothy were probably written after the *Acts*. The mentions of Luke in the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon are equivalent to only one, these two writings making one whole. We think, then, that the author of the third Gospel and of the *Acts* was really Luke, disciple of Paul.

The very name of Luke or Lucanus, and the profession of physician exercised by Paul's disciple so named, respond very well to the evidence which the two books furnish of their author. We have shown, indeed, that the author of the third Gospel and *Acts* was probably a native of Philippi, a Roman colony in which Latin predominated. What is more, the author of the third Gospel and the *Acts* is ill-acquainted with Judaism and the affairs of Palestine; he scarcely knows Hebrew; he is conversant with the ideas of the pagan world, and he writes Greek fairly correctly. The work was written far from Judæa, for people ignorant of geography, who troubled their heads neither about sound Rabbinical learning nor Hebrew names. The dominant idea of the author is that, had the people been free to follow its leanings, it would have embraced the faith of Jesus, and that it was the Jewish aristocracy that prevented it. The word *Jew* is always taken by him in ill part and as synonymous with enemy of Christians. On the other hand, he shows himself very favourable to the Samaritan heretics.

To what epoch are we to assign the composition of this important work? Luke first appears in Paul's company at the time of the Apostle's earliest journey in Macedonia, about the year 52. Let us say he was then twenty-five years of age; it would be only natural that he should have lived till the year 100. The narrative of the *Acts* stops at the year 63. But the compilation of the *Acts* being obviously posterior to that of the third Gospel, and the date of the compilation of the latter being assigned in a fairly precise manner to the years immediately succeeding the downfall of Jerusalem (70), we cannot dream of placing the compilation of the *Acts* earlier than 71 or 72.

Were it certain that the *Acts* was written immediately after the Gospel, we should have to stop there. But doubt on that point is permissible. Certain facts support the belief that an interval elapsed between the composition of the third Gospel and that of the *Acts;* a singular contradiction, indeed, is to be remarked between the last chapters of the Gospel and the first of *Acts*. According to the last chapter of the Gospel, the ascension seems to have taken place on the very day of the resurrection. According to the first chapter of *Acts*, the ascension only took place after the

lapse of forty days. Clearly, this second version offers us a more advanced form of the legend, a form adopted when the need was felt of making room for the different appearances, and of giving the life of Jesus after death a complete and logical setting. We should be tempted to conjecture, then, that this new manner of conceiving things only reached the author, or occurred to his mind, in the interval between the compilation of the two works. In any case, it remains very curious that the author, at a few lines' distance, believes himself bound to add new details to his first narrative and develop it. If his first book were still in his hands, why did he not make the additions to it which, separated as they are, have so much clumsiness? This, however, is not decisive, and a weighty circumstance supports the belief that Luke conceived at the same time the plan of the whole. I refer to the preface set at the beginning of the Gospel, which seems common to the two books. The contradiction, which we have just pointed out, is perhaps to be explained by the small solicitude observed in maintaining a rigorous chronology. This is what causes all the narratives of the life of Jesus after death to be in complete disagreement on the duration of that life. So little care was taken to be historic that the same narrator made no scruple of successively suggesting two irreconcilable systems. The three narratives of Paul's conversion in the *Acts* also present minor variations, which simply prove how little the author troubled about accuracy of detail.

Apparently, then, we should not be far from the truth in supposing that the *Acts* was written about the year 80. The spirit of the book, indeed, well responds to the age of the first of the Flavians. The author appears to avoid all that might wound the feelings of the Romans. He likes to show how the Roman functionaries have shown favour to the new sect, have even at times embraced it; how, at least, they have defended it against the Jews, how righteous is imperial justice, and how far above the passions of the local powers. In particular, he insists on the advantages owed by Paul to his status as Roman citizen. He abruptly cuts short his narrative at the moment of Paul's arrival in Rome, perhaps to escape having to relate Nero's cruelties to the Christians. The contrast with the Apocalypse is striking. The Apocalypse, written in the year 68, is full of the memory of Nero's infamies; it overflows with terrible hatred of Rome. Here we have, we feel, a quiet man who lives in a tranquil epoch. From about the year 70 up to the last years of the first century, the situation was fairly favourable for Christians. Members of the Flavian family gave allegiance to Christianity. Who knows if Luke were not acquainted with Flavius Clemens, if he were not of his *familia*, if the *Acts* were not written for that powerful personage, whose official position exacted respectful attentions? Some indications have led to the belief that the book was written at Rome. One would indeed say that the principles of the Roman Church have had their influence on the author. That Church from the earliest centuries had the political and hierarchical character which has ever distinguished it. The worthy Luke could enter into that spirit. He has very advanced ideas on ecclesiastical authority; in him the germ of the episcopate is to be descried. He wrote his history in the tone of a thoroughgoing apologist, which is that of the official historians of the court of Rome. He acted as might an Ultramontane historian of Clement XIV., praising at once the Pope and the Jesuits, seeking to persuade us, by a narrative full of compunction, that on both sides of the disputation the rules of charity were observed. In a couple of hundred years it will be thus demonstrated that Cardinal Antonelli and M. de Mérode loved each other as two brothers. The author of the *Acts* was, but with a simplicity that will never again be equalled, the first of these complaisant narrators, sanctimoniously satisfied, determined to find that all in the Church goes on in an evangelical

manner. Too loyal to condemn his master Paul, too orthodox not to side with the prevailing official view, he effaced differences of doctrine to let only the common goal be seen, which, indeed, all great founders pursue by paths so divergent and rivalries so vigorous.

It is easy to understand how a man who has systematically put on such a disposition of spirit is the least capable of men for describing things as they actually happened. Historic fidelity is to him a matter of indifference ; edification is all that matters. Luke makes no concealment of it ; he writes "in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."[1] There was already, then, a conventional system of ecclesiastical history, which was officially taught, and the outlines of which, as well as those of the Gospel history itself, were probably already fixed. The dominant characteristic of the *Acts*, like that of the third Gospel, is a tender piety, a keen sympathy with the Gentiles, a conciliatory spirit, an extreme interest in the supernatural, love of the little and humble, great democratic feeling, or rather the conviction that the people is naturally Christian, that it is the great who withhold it from following its good instincts, an exalted view of the power of the Church and its chiefs, and a very remarkable taste for life lived in common. The methods of composition are the same in both works, in such a manner that we stand with respect to the history of the Apostles as we should stand with respect to the Gospel history, if, to sketch that latter history, we had only a single text, the Gospel of Luke.

The drawbacks of such a situation can be appreciated. The life of Jesus, set forth from the third Gospel alone, would be extremely defective and incomplete. This we know because, in the case of the life of Jesus, comparison is possible. Along with Luke (without speaking of the fourth Gospel) we possess Matthew and Mark, who, relatively to Luke, are, in part at least, first-hand authorities. We can lay a finger on the violent methods by means of which Luke disjoints or mixes together anecdotes, on the fashion in which he modifies the colour of certain facts to suit his personal views, on the pious legends which he adds to more authentic traditions. Is it not obvious that, could we make a like comparison for the *Acts*, we should end in finding defects of an analogous kind? The *Acts* in its early chapters would doubtless even seem inferior to the third Gospel, for probably these chapters were compiled from documents less numerous and less universally accepted.

A fundamental distinction is, indeed, necessary here. From the point of view of historical value, the book of *Acts* divides into two parts: the one comprising the first twelve chapters and relating the principal events of the history of the primitive Church ; the other comprising the sixteen other chapters entirely devoted to the missions of St. Paul. This second part itself includes two kinds of narratives : on the one hand, those in which the narrator professes to be an eye-witness ; on the other, those in which he only reports what he has been told. It is clear that, even in this latter case, his authority is great. Often it is the conversations of Paul which have supplied the information. Towards the close especially the narrative assumes an astonishing character of precision. The last pages of the *Acts* are the only completely historical pages which we possess on Christian origins. The first pages, on the contrary, are the most open to attack of the whole New Testament. It is, above all, for those early years that the author obeys settled opinions, similar to those which preoccupied him in the composition of his Gospel, and more misleading still. His forty days' theory, his account of the Ascension, closing by a kind of final translation and with theatrical solemnity the fantastic life of Jesus, his manner of relating the descent

[1] Luke i. 4.

of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous preaching, his conception of the gift of tongues, so different from that of St. Paul:—all these reveal the reflections of a relatively late period, in which the legend is fully ripe, and, in some measure, rounded off in all its parts. All, according to him, takes place with strange scenic display and a great elaboration of the marvellous. We must remember that the author is writing half a century later, far from the land where they took place, about incidents which he has not witnessed, and which his master has not witnessed either, following traditions in part fabulous or transfigured. Not only is Luke of another generation than the first founders of Christianity, but he is of another world; he is a Hellenist, very little of a Jew, almost a stranger to Jerusalem and the secrets of Jewish life; he has not been in contact with primitive Christian society; scarcely has he known its last representatives. In the miracles which he relates we have the impression rather of *a priori* inventions than of facts transformed; the miracles of Peter and those of Paul form two series corresponding to one another. His characters resemble each other; Peter differs in no respect from Paul, nor Paul from Peter. The speeches which he puts in the mouths of his heroes, though skilfully adapted to the circumstances, are all couched in the same style, and belong to the author rather than to those to whom he ascribes them. Impossibilities are even to be met with in them. The *Acts*, in a word, is a dogmatic history, so arranged as to support the orthodox doctrines of the time or to inculcate the ideas most favourable to the author's piety. Let us add that things could not have fallen out otherwise. The origin of each religion is only known by the narrations of believers. It is only the sceptic who would write history *ad narrandum*.

These are not simple suspicions, conjectures of a criticism mistrustful to excess. They are well-founded inductions: whenever we have the chance of checking the narrative of *Acts*, we find it defective and based on a system. The controlling check, indeed, which we cannot demand from the Synoptic texts, we can demand from the Epistles of Paul, more especially from the Epistle to the Galatians. It is clear that, in cases where the *Acts* and the Epistles are in disagreement, the preference must always be given to the Epistles, texts of absolute authenticity, greater antiquity, full sincerity, and lacking a legendary element. In history documents have the more weight the less they have historic form. The authority of all the chronicles must yield to that of an authentic inscription, or medal, or charter, or letter. From this point of view the Epistles of ascertained authors or ascertained dates are the basis of all history of Christian origins. Without them it can be said that doubt would assail and ruin from beginning to end the life of Jesus itself. Now, in two very important instances the Epistles cast a vivid light on the special tendencies of the author of the *Acts*, and his desire to efface all trace of the dissensions which existed between Paul and the Apostles of Jerusalem.

First of all, the author of the *Acts* would have it that Paul, after the Damascus incident (ix. 19, *et seq.*; xxii. 17, *et seq.*), came to Jerusalem at a time when his conversion was scarcely known, that he was introduced to the Apostles, that he lived with the Apostles and faithful on the most cordial footing, that he disputed publicly with the Hellenistic Jews, and that a conspiracy on the part of the latter and a divine revelation led to his departure from Jerusalem. Now, Paul gives us quite a different account of how things happened. To prove that he is not dependent on the Twelve, and that to Jesus himself he owes his doctrine and mission, he assures us (Gal. i. 11, *et seq.*) that, after his conversion, he shunned taking counsel with anyone whatever or going to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before him; that he went to preach in the Hauran on his

own initiative and on no one's mission; that three years later, it is true, he journeyed to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Cephas; that he remained with him for fifteen days, but that he saw no other Apostle save James, the brother of the Lord, so that his face was unknown to the Churches of Judæa. The effort to soften down the asperities of the rugged Apostle, to present him as the colleague of the Twelve, working at Jerusalem in accord with them, is obviously apparent here. Jerusalem is made out to be his capital and point of departure; there is a desire to show that his doctrine was so identical with that of the Apostles that he might in some measure take their place in preaching; his first apostolate is reduced to the synagogues of Damascus; attempts are made to show him as disciple and hearer, which he never was; the time between his conversion and his first journey to Jerusalem is contracted; his sojourn in that city is lengthened; he is represented as preaching to the general satisfaction; it is asserted that he lived on intimate terms with all the Apostles, although he himself assures us that he saw but two; the brethren of Jerusalem are exhibited watching over him, while Paul declares that his face is unknown to them.

The desire to make Paul an assiduous visitor to Jerusalem, which has led our author to advance and prolong his first stay in that city after his conversion, seems to have disposed him to attribute to the Apostle a journey too many. According to him, Paul came to Jerusalem with Barnabas bearing the offering of the faithful at the time of the famine of the year 44 (*Acts* xi. 30, xii. 25). But Paul expressly declares that, between the journey that took place three years after his conversion and the journey on the circumcision affair, he did not visit Jerusalem (Gal. i. and ii.). In other words, Paul formally denies any journey between *Acts* ix. 26 and *Acts* xv. 2. Were we, against all reason, to deny the identity of the journey related in Gal. ii. 1, and following with the journey related in *Acts* xv. 2 and following, we should reach a not less glaring contradiction. "Three years after my conversion," says St. Paul, "I went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Cephas. Fourteen years later I went up to Jerusalem anew." There have been doubts whether the point of departure of these fourteen years was the conversion, or the journey that followed at an interval of three years. Let us take the first hypothesis, which is the more favourable for him who wishes to defend the account given in *Acts*. There would then be at least eleven years, according to St. Paul, between his first and second journey to Jerusalem; and assuredly there are not eleven years between what is told in *Acts* ix. 26, and following, and what is reported in *Acts* xi. 30. And whoever would maintain it in the teeth of all probability would fall into another contradiction. In fact, what is reported in *Acts* xi. 30 is contemporary with the death of James, son of Zebedee, which provides us with the only fixed date in the *Acts of the Apostles*, since it very shortly preceded the death of Herod Agrippa I., which occurred in the year 44. If Paul's second journey really took place at least fourteen years after his conversion, if he really made it in 44, that conversion must have taken place in the year 30, which is absurd. It is out of the question, then, to accord any reality to the journey related in *Acts* xi. 30 and xii. 35.

These comings and goings seem to have been told in a very inexact fashion by our author. A comparison of *Acts* xvii. 14–16, xviii. 5, with 1 Thess. iii. 1–2 reveals another contradiction. But this not being due to dogmatic motives, we need not refer to it here.

What is important to the subject which occupies us, what gives criticism a ray of light in this difficult question of the historic value of *Acts*, is the comparison of the passages relating to the affair of the circumcision in *Acts* (chapter xv.) and in the Epistle to the Galatians (chapter ii.). According to the

Acts, brethren of Judæa, having come to Antioch and maintained the necessity of circumcision for converted pagans, a deputation, composed of Paul, Barnabas, and several others, is sent from Antioch to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles and Elders on this question. They are cordially received by all; a great assembly is held. Dissension scarce shows itself, smothered as it is under the effusion of a mutual charity and the happiness of meeting together. Peter pronounces the opinion that one would expect to find in Paul's mouth—namely, that converted pagans are not subject to the law of Moses. To this view James adds but a very slight restriction. Paul does not speak, and, indeed, he has no need to speak, since his doctrine is here put in the mouth of Peter. The opinion of the brethren of Judæa finds support from no one. A solemn decree is passed in conformity with James's view. This decree is announced to the Churches by deputies expressly chosen for the purpose.

Let us now compare Paul's account in the Epistle to the Galatians. Paul asserts that the journey, which he made on this occasion to Jerusalem, was the effect of a spontaneous impulse, and even the result of a revelation. On arriving at Jerusalem, he notifies his Gospel to those who have a right to know it; he has private interviews with those who appear to be persons of consequence. Not a single criticism is passed on him; nothing is imparted to him; he is only asked to remember the poor of Jerusalem. If Titus, who has accompanied him, consents to let himself be circumcised, it is because of the intrusive "false brethren." Paul makes them this passing concession, but he does not submit to them. As to the men of importance (Paul only speaks of them with a tinge of bitterness and irony), they have taught him nothing new. What is more, Cephas having later come to Antioch, Paul "resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned."[1] At first, indeed, Peter has eaten with all indiscriminately. But James's emissaries arrive on the scene; Peter hides himself, shuns the uncircumcised. Seeing that he does not walk "uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel," Paul upbraids Cephas before everybody and bitterly reproaches his conduct.

The difference is obvious. On the one hand, a solemn concord; on the other, ill-suppressed resentments and extreme susceptibilities. On the one side, a sort of council; on the other, nothing of the kind. On the one hand, a formal decree carried by a recognised authority; on the other, diverse opinions which remain face to face, neither yielding to the other, except it be formally. It is needless to say which is the version that merits the preference. The narrative of the *Acts* is scarcely feasible, since, according to this account, the council is occasioned by a dispute of which there is no longer any trace so soon as the council assembles. The two speakers discourse in a manner contrary to what we know of their positions from other sources. The decree which the council is said to have passed is assuredly a fiction. Had this decree, the wording of which would have been drafted by James, been really promulgated, why these terrors of the good and timid Peter before the people sent by James? Why should he conceal himself? He and the Antioch Christians were acting in full conformity with the decree, the terms of which must have been ratified by James himself. The affair of the circumcision took place about 51. Some years later, about 56, the quarrel which the decree would have ended is more acute than ever. The Church of Galatia is troubled by new emissaries from the Jewish party in Jerusalem. Paul responds to this new attack on the part of his enemies by his crushing Epistle. If the decree reported in *Acts* xv. had any reality, Paul would have had a simple means of putting an end to the debate—that of citing it. But all that he says implies the non-existence of this decree.

[1] Gal. ii. 11.

In 57, Paul, writing to the Corinthians, ignores the same decree, and even violates its prescriptions. The decree commands abstention from meats sacrificed to idols. Paul, on the contrary, is of opinion that one may very well eat of such meats, provided nobody is scandalised thereby, but that it is needful to abstain if it would cause scandal. In 58, finally, at the time of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, James is more stubborn than ever. One of the characteristic features of the *Acts*—a feature which amply proves that the author is less concerned to present the historic truth, and even to satisfy logic, than to edify pious readers—is that the question of the admission of the uncircumcised is always being settled in it, without ever really being so. It is first settled by the baptism of the eunuch of the Candace, then by the baptism of the centurion Cornelius, both miraculously commanded, then by the foundation of the Church of Antioch (xi. 19, *et seq.*), then by the alleged council of Jerusalem; all of which does not prevent the question being still in suspense in the last pages of the book (xxi. 20–21). The truth is that it always remained in that state. The two sections of nascent Christianity never coalesced. But one of them, that which retained the practices of Judaism, remained unfruitful, and died out in obscurity. Paul was so far from being accepted by all that, after his death, a portion of Christianity anathematised him and pursued him with calumnies.

It is in our third Book that we shall have to treat in detail the essential question involved in these curious incidents. We have wished to do no more here than give a few examples of the way in which the author of the *Acts* understands history, of his system of conciliation, and of his pre-conceived ideas. Are we to conclude from this that the first chapters of *Acts* are devoid of authority, as distinguished critics think, that its fictitious element goes so far as to invent all kinds of persons, such as the eunuch of the Candace, the centurion Cornelius, and even the deacon Stephen and the pious Tabitha? I do not believe this at all. Probably the writer of the *Acts* does not invent his personages; but he is a skilful advocate, who writes to prove theories, and who tries to make use of the events of which he has heard to demonstrate his pet theses, which are the lawfulness of calling in the Gentiles and the divine institution of the hierarchy. Such a document demands the greatest precaution in its use; but absolutely to reject it is as little critical as to follow it blindly. Certain paragraphs, moreover, even in this first part, have a universally recognised value, and represent authentic memoirs copied by the last compiler. Chapter xii., in particular, is of very good alloy, and appears to proceed from John Mark.

It is clear how embarrassed we should be, had we no other documents for this history than a book so legendary. Fortunately we have others which, it is true, bear directly upon the period which will form the subject of our third Book, but which already throw a great light on this. These are the Epistles of St. Paul. The Epistle to the Galatians, above all, is a veritable treasure, the basis of the whole chronology of this period, the key which unlocks all, the testimony which must reassure the most sceptical on the reality of things that might well be suspected. I beg serious readers, who may be tempted to regard me as too bold or too credulous, to read over again the first two chapters of this singular work. These are, most assuredly, the two most important pages for the study of nascent Christianity. The Epistles of Paul have, in fact, one unequalled advantage in this history—their absolute authenticity. No question has ever been raised by serious criticism of the authenticity of the Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans. The grounds on which it has been desired to attack the two Epistles to the Thessalonians and that to the Philippians are insufficient. At the beginning of our third Book we shall

have to discuss the objections, more plausible, although as little convincing, which have been raised to the Epistle to the Colossians and the letter to Philemon; the special problem offered by the Epistle to the Ephesians; the forcible proofs, finally, which lead us to reject the two Epistles to Timothy and that to Titus. The Epistles of which we shall have to make use in this volume are those whose authenticity is indubitable; or, at least, such inductions as we shall draw from the others are independent of the question of knowing whether or not they were dictated by St. Paul.

There is no need to repeat here the critical rules which have been observed in the composition of this work, for that has already been done in the introduction to the *Life of Jesus*. The first twelve chapters of the *Acts* are, indeed, a document analogous to the Synoptic Gospels, and demand similar treatment. Documents of this order, half historic, half legendary, can be taken neither as legends nor as history. Nearly all is false in detail, and, nevertheless, we are given opportunities of inferring precious truths. Purely and simply to translate these narratives is not to write history. They are, in fact, frequently contradicted by other and more authoritative texts. Consequently, even in cases where we have but one text, we have always grounds to fear that, were there others, contradiction would exist. For the life of Jesus, the narrative of Luke is constantly checked and rectified by the two other Synoptic Gospels and by the fourth. Is it not likely, I repeat, that, if we had for the *Acts* something corresponding to the Synoptic Gospels and the fourth Gospel, the *Acts* would be shown in error upon a host of points on which we have now its testimony alone? Entirely different rules will guide us in our third Book, where we shall have positive history to deal with, and first-hand, sometimes autobiographical, material at our disposal. When St. Paul himself gives us the story of some episode in his life, which he had no interest to present in a deceptive light, it is clear that, following Tillemont's method, we have merely to insert his actual words in our narrative; but when we have to do with a narrator pre-occupied with a system, writing to exploit certain ideas, exhibiting that childish manner of narration with its vague and irresolute outlines, its crude and glaring colours, which legend always presents, the critic's duty is not to adhere to the text; his duty is to attempt to discover what of truth that text may conceal, without ever feeling certain of having found it. To forbid criticism, such interpretations would be as unreasonable as to order the astronomer to take account merely of the apparent state of the sky. Does not astronomy, on the contrary, consist in redressing the parallax caused by the position of the observer, and constructing true and actual conditions from deceptive apparent conditions?

How, moreover, can it be asserted that documents which include impossibilities are to be followed to the letter? The first twelve chapters of *Acts* are a tissue of miracles. Now, there is one positive rule in criticism, which is to give no place in historic narrations to miraculous circumstances. This is not the result of a metaphysical system. It is quite simply an observed fact. Incidents of this nature have never been verified. All alleged miraculous episodes, when closely scrutinised, resolve themselves into illusion or imposture. Were a single miracle proved, we could not reject in the lump all those recorded in ancient histories; for, after all, even admitting that a very great number of these were false, we might still believe that some were true. But it is not thus. All miracles capable of being discussed vanish into thin air. From this are we not entitled to conclude that the miracles centuries distant from us, on which there is no means of bringing contradictory argument to bear, are also unreal? In other terms, miracles only exist when they are believed; what makes the supernatural is faith. Catholicism itself, which claims that miraculous power is not yet extinct

within it, submits to the influence of this law. The miracles it professes to perform do not take place where they ought to take place. When there is such a simple means of proof, why not make use of it in the light of day? A miracle performed at Paris before competent scientific observers would put an end to so many doubts! But, alas! that is just what never happens. Never has a miracle occurred before the public which needs conversion—I mean, before the sceptical. The condition of the miracle is the credulity of the witness. No miracle has ever been manifested before those who would have been capable of discussing and criticising it. To this there is not a single exception. Cicero remarked, with his customary good sense and shrewdness: "Since when has this secret force disappeared? May it not have been since men have grown less credulous?"[1]

"But," someone says, "if it be impossible to prove that there has ever been a supernatural event, it is also impossible to prove there has never been one. The positive man of science who denies the supernatural proceeds, then, as illogically as the believer who admits it." Not at all: it is to him who affirms a proposition to prove it. He to whom it is affirmed has but one thing to do, to await the proof and submit to it if sound. Had people come to Buffon, calling on him to give a place in his *Natural History* to the sirens and centaurs, Buffon would have replied: "Show me a specimen of these beings, and I shall admit them; till then they have no existence for me." "But prove that they do not exist." "It is for you to prove that they *do* exist." The burden of proof in science weighs upon those who allege a fact. Why do we no longer believe in angels and demons, although innumerable historical texts suppose their existence? Because the existence of an angel or a demon has never been proved.

To support the reality of miracle, appeal is made to phenomena claimed to have taken place outside the course of natural law—the creation of man, for instance. "The creation of man," we are told, "could only have been effected by a direct intervention of the Deity; why should not this direct intervention have been exercised at other decisive moments in the development of the universe?" I shall not insist upon the grotesque philosophy and paltry conception of the Deity which such a manner of reasoning implies, for history must pursue its method independent of all philosophy. Without trespassing in the least upon the domain of theodicy, it is easy to show how defective is such a line of argument. It is equivalent to saying that all that no longer happens in the world as it is, all that we cannot explain in the actual state of science, is miraculous; but in that case the sun is a miracle, for science is far from having explained the sun; the conception of every man is a miracle, for physiology is still silent upon that point; consciousness is a miracle, for it is an absolute mystery; every animal is a miracle, for the origin of life is a problem for which we have scarce any data. If the reply be made that all life, all consciousness, is indeed of an order higher than nature, it is mere juggling with words. We are willing to understand it thus, but the word "miracle" has still to be explained. What kind of a miracle can it be that takes place every day, and at every hour of the day? Miracle is not the unexplained; it is a formal derogation, in the name of a particular will, of known laws. What we deny are miracles of the exceptional order, special interventions, like that of a watchmaker who has made a clock, a very fine clock it is true, but one to which, nevertheless, he has from time to time to lend a hand, to make up for the deficiencies of the works. That God permanently resides in all things, more especially in all that lives, is precisely our theory; all we say is that no special interposition of a supernatural force has ever been verified. We deny the reality of special instances of the

[1] *De Divinatione*, ii. 57.

supernatural until we are brought an incident of this kind demonstrated. To seek such an incident before the creation of man, to dispense with proof of historic miracles, to take flight beyond history to epochs where all verification is impossible: this is to seek refuge behind the clouds, to prove one obscurity by another more obscure, to contest a known law by reason of an event of which we know nothing. Miracles which must have taken place before any witness existed are invoked for lack of its being possible to cite any which had good witnesses.

Undoubtedly there have occurred in the universe at remote epochs phenomena which no longer manifest themselves, at least on the same scale, in the world as it is. But these phenomena had their reason to be at the hour they presented themselves. In geological formations are found a great number of minerals and precious stones, which are apparently not produced in nature now. Messrs. Mitscherlich, Ebelmen, de Sénarmont, and Daubrée have artificially reconstructed the majority of these minerals and precious stones. If it be dubious whether success will ever be attained in the artificial production of life, that is due to the fact that reproduction of the circumstances under which life began (if it did begin) will perhaps be for ever beyond human resources. How can one recall a planetary condition which passed away thousands of years ago? How conduct an experiment lasting centuries?

The diversity of environments and the ages of gradual evolution—those are what people forget when they dub miracles the phenomena which occurred formerly, and no longer occur to-day. In some heavenly body at the present hour processes may be going on which have ceased in our planet for an infinite time. Assuredly the formation of mankind would be a monstrous absurdity if we supposed it sudden and instantaneous. It is resumed in general analogies (without ceasing to be mysterious) if we see therein the result of slow, continuous progress through incalculable ages. We must not apply to the embryonic life the laws that apply to the life of maturity. The embryo developes, one after another, all its organs; the adult man, on the contrary, creates no more organs for himself. He creates no more, because he is no longer in the age of creation, even as language makes no new inventions, because there are no more to make. But what good is it to follow adversaries who confuse the issue? We ask for a verified historic miracle. They reply that such miracles must have happened before the dawn of history. Certainly, were a proof required of the necessity of supernatural beliefs for certain states of soul, we should have it in this instance of minds, gifted with penetration in all other concerns, being capable of letting the edifice of their faith rest on so desperate an argument.

Others, abandoning the miracle of the physical order, take refuge in the miracle of the moral order, without which, they claim, such events cannot be explained. Assuredly the production of Christianity is the greatest fact in the religious history of the world; but, for all that, it is no miracle. Buddhism and Babism have had martyrs as numerous, as exalted, as resigned, as Christianity. The miracles attending the foundation of Islamism are of an entirely different nature, and I confess they touch me little. It must be remarked, however, that the Mussulman doctors use the same reasonings about the establishment of Islamism, its diffusion like a train of gunpowder, its rapid conquests, and the power which everywhere gives it a rule so absolute, that the Christian apologists use on the establishment of Christianity, and that they claim to show clearly the finger of God therein. Let us even grant that the foundation of Christianity is a unique event. Another thing absolutely unique is Hellenism, that word being understood as the ideal of perfection in literature, art, and philosophy, which Greece has realised. Greek art surpasses all other

arts as much as Christianity surpasses the other religions, and the Acropolis of Athens, a collection of masterpieces, beside which all others are but unskilled groping or more or less successful imitations, is perhaps that which in its kind most defies comparison. Hellenism, in other terms, is as much a prodigy of beauty as Christianity is a prodigy of sanctity. A unique thing is not a miraculous thing. God is present in diverse degrees in all that is beautiful and good and true. But he is never so exclusively immanent in any single one of his manifestations that the presence of his breath in a religious or philosophic movement must be deemed a privilege or an exception.

I hope that the interval of two years and a half which has elapsed since the publication of the *Life of Jesus* will incline certain readers to consider these problems with more calm. Religious controversy is always unfair, without knowing it or wishing it. Independent discussion, anxious investigation are not in its line; it is a question of defending a fixed doctrine. of proving that he who dissents from it is either ignorant or dishonest. Calumnies, misconceptions, falsifications of ideas and texts, triumphant arguments about things that the adversary has never uttered, cries of victory over errors which he has not committed; nothing seems disloyal to him who believes he has in his hands the interests of absolute truth. I should have been very ignorant of history had I not anticipated all this. I have impassivity enough to have felt it but little, and a sufficiently keen taste for matters of faith to be able to appreciate amiably what at times was touching in the sentiment which inspired my contradictors. Often, in seeing so much simplicity, so pious an assurance, a wrath kindled so ingenuously in souls so good and beautiful, I have said, like John Huss at sight of an old woman who laboured under the burden of a faggot for his pyre: "*O sancta simplicitas!*" I have only regretted certain emotions which could only be sterile. As the fine Scripture phrase has it: "The Lord was not in the wind."[1] Ah! no doubt, if all this trouble assisted the discovery of truth, we should be consoled for so much agitation. But it is not so; truth is not made for the impassioned man. It reserves itself for the spirits who seek without prejudice, without persistent love, without lasting hate, with an absolute liberty, and with no underlying intention of acting on the direction of human affairs. These problems are but one of the innumerable questions of which the world is full, and which the curious examine. The statement of a theoretical opinion need offend no one. Those who hold fast by their faith as a treasure have a very simple means of defending it, which is to take no account of works written from a point of view that differs from theirs. The timid do best not to read.

There are practical persons who, when a scientific work is under discussion, ask what political party the author has proposed to satisfy, and who would have a poem include a lesson in morality. Such persons will not allow that one may write for other than a propagandist cause. The idea of art and of science, aspiring but to find the true, to realise the beautiful, aloof from all policy, is alien to them. Between ourselves and such persons misunderstandings are inevitable. "These folk," as a Greek philosopher said, "take with their left hand what we give them with our right." A host of letters, dictated by honest feeling, which I have received, are thus to be summed up: "What, then, have you wished? What end have you set before you?" *Mon Dieu!* precisely the same as that which one takes in writing all history. If I had several lives at my disposal, I should employ one in writing a history of Alexandria, another to writing a history of Athens, a third to writing either a history of the French Revolution or a history of the Franciscan Order. What aim would I give myself

[1] 1 Kings xix. 11.

in writing these works? One alone: to find the truth and make it prevail, so to labour that the great things of the past might be known with the utmost precision possible, and presented in a manner worthy of them. The thought of undermining any one's faith is a thousand leagues from me. Such works ought to be carried out with supreme indifference, as though we wrote for a deserted planet. Every concession to scruples of an inferior order is a lapse in devotion to art and truth. Who does not see that the absence of proselytism is the quality and the defect of works composed in such a spirit?

The first principle of the critical school, in fact, is that each one admits what in the matter of faith he has a need to admit, and, in a sense, makes the bed of his beliefs proportionate to his measurements and figure. Why should we be so foolish as to meddle with what depends on circumstances over which no one has any control? If anyone comes over to our principles, it is because he has the turn of mind and training necessary for him to come; all our efforts would not give this training and turn of mind to those who do not have them. Philosophy differs from faith, in that faith is supposed to operate by itself, independently of the comprehension we have of dogmas. Our belief, on the contrary, is that a truth has no value, save when it is reached by itself, and when we perceive the whole order of ideas with which it is bound up. We are under no obligation to keep silence on those of our opinions which are not in accord with the belief of a portion of our fellows; we make no sacrifice to the demands of diverse orthodoxies; but no more do we dream of attacking or provoking them; we act as though they did not exist. For my own part, the day on which I could be convicted of an effort to attract to my ideas a single adherent who did not come of his own accord, would bring me the keenest pain. I should conclude, either that my mind had let itself be disturbed in the freedom and serenity of its procedure, or that something was weighing me down, since I could no longer find content in the joyous contemplation of the universe.

Who does not recognise, moreover, that, were my intention to make war on established faiths, I ought to proceed in an entirely different manner, to make it my one aim to show up impossibilities, contradictions of texts and dogmas held as sacred? That irksome task has been done a thousand times, and done well. In 1856[1] I wrote as follows: "Once and for all, I protest against the false interpretation which would be put upon my labours if the various essays on the history of religions, which I have published, or shall be able to publish in the future, be taken for polemical works. Regarded as polemics, these essays, I am the first to recognise, would be very unskilful. Polemic exacts a strategy to which I am a stranger: one must know how to choose the weak side of one's opponents, and to stick to it, never touching uncertain questions, refraining from all concession—that is to say, renouncing what forms the very essence of the scientific spirit. Such is not my method. The fundamental question upon which religious discussion must turn—that is to say, the question of revelation and the supernatural—I never touch; not that this question is resolved for me with entire certainty, but because the discussion of such a question is not scientific; or, to put it better, because independent science supposes it previously decided. Certainly, if I pursued some polemical or proselytising purpose, this would be a great mistake; it would be transferring to the domain of delicate and obscure problems a question which permits more obvious treatment in the coarsened terms in which the controversialists and apologists usually set it. Far from regretting the advantages which I thus give against myself, I shall rejoice, if it will convince the theologians that my writings are of another order than theirs,

[1] Preface to *Studies in Religious History*.

that they are to be looked upon as pure researches, assailable as such, in which an attempt has sometimes been made to apply to the Jewish and Christian religions the principles of criticism which are followed in other branches of history and philology. As to the discussion of purely theological questions, I shall not enter upon it, any more than Messrs. Burnouf, Creuzer, Guigniaut, and so many other critical historians of the religions of antiquity believe themselves under an obligation to undertake the refutation or apology of the faiths with which they deal. The history of humanity is for me a vast whole, in which all is essentially unequal and diverse, but in which all is of the same order, results from the same causes, obeys the same laws. These laws I investigate with no other intention than that of discovering the exact gradation of meaning of that which is. Nothing will induce me to exchange a rôle obscure indeed, but fruitful to science, for the rôle of controversialist, an easy rôle, since it guarantees the writer an assured favour with those persons who believe that war should be met with war. For this controversy, of which I am far from disputing the necessity, but for which I have neither taste nor aptitude, Voltaire sufficed. It is impossible to be at once a good controversialist and a good historian. Voltaire, so weak in his erudition ; Voltaire, who seems so deficient in sympathy with antiquity to us who have been initiated into a better method—Voltaire is victorious a score of times over adversaries still more devoid of the critical spirit than himself. A new edition of the works of that great man would satisfy the need which the present time seems to feel of making a response to the encroachments of theology ; a response faulty enough in itself, but fitted for what it has to oppose ; an obsolete response to an obsolete science. Let us do better, we who have the love of the true, and a great desire to know. Let us leave these squabbles to those who delight in them ; let us work for the small number of those who walk in the great highway of the human mind. Popularity, I am aware, preferably attaches itself to writers who, instead of pursuing the highest form of truth, set themselves to strive with the opinions of their time ; but, by a just penalty, they lose their value so soon as the opinion they have fought with has ceased to be. Those who refuted magic and judicial astrology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries rendered reason an immense service ; and yet their writings are unknown to-day ; their very triumph has brought them oblivion."

I shall invariably observe this rule, the only one conformable to the dignity of science. I know that researches in religious history touch on vital questions which seem to exact solution. Persons unfamiliar with free speculation do not understand the calm, slow processes of thought; practical spirits cry out against science, which does not respond to their enthusiasm. Let us forbid ourselves these vain fervours. Let us refrain from founding aught; let us remain in our respective Churches, profiting by their venerable worship and tradition of virtue, participating in their good works, and enjoying the poetry of their past. Let us only regret their intolerance. Let us even forgive that intolerance, for it is, like egoism, one of the necessities of human nature. To suppose that henceforth new religious groups will be formed, or that the proportion between those that exist to-day will undergo much change, is to fly in the face of probability. Catholicism will soon be strained by great schisms; the age of Avignon, of the anti-Popes, of the Clementines and the Urbanists, is about to return. The Catholic Church is to repeat its fourteenth century; but, despite its divisions, it will remain the Catholic Church. It is probable that in a hundred years the proportion between the number of Protestants, that of Catholics, and that of Jews, will not have materially varied ; but a great change will be accomplished, or rather will become manifest to the eyes of all. Each of these religious families

will have two kinds of adherents, some absolute believers, as in the Middle Ages, the others sacrificing the letter and holding fast only to the spirit. This second section will increase in each communion, and, as the spirit reconciles as much as the letter divides, the spiritually, minded of each communion will arrive at such a point of reconciliation that they will neglect to unite entirely. Fanaticism will be lost in a general tolerance. Dogma will become a mysterious Ark, which there will be a general agreement never to open. If the Ark be empty, what matters it? One religion alone will resist, I fear, this dogmatic enervation—that is Islamism. There are among certain Mussulmans of the old schools, and among some eminent men in Constantinople—there are, above all, in Persia—the germs of a broad and conciliatory spirit. If these good germs be stifled by the fanaticism of the Ulemas, Islamism will perish; for two things are obvious: the first is that modern civilisation does not desire that ancient faiths should wholly expire; the second is that it will not suffer being hampered in its work by old religious institutions. These latter have to choose between bending and dying.

As to pure religion, whose precise claim is to be neither a sect nor a Church apart, why should it appropriate the inconveniences of a position the advantages of which it does not possess? Why should it raise banner against banner, when it knows that salvation is possible to every man, everywhere, that it depends on the degree of nobleness which each one bears within him? That Protestantism in the sixteenth century should have led to an open rupture is easy to understand. Protestantism set out from too absolute a faith. Far from corresponding to a weakening of dogmatism, the reformation marked a renascence of the Christian spirit in its most rigid form. The nineteenth-century movement, on the contrary, takes its rise from a feeling which is the reverse of dogmatism; it will culminate, not in sects or separate Churches, but in a general mitigation of all the Churches. Strongly marked divisions augment the fanaticism of orthodoxy and provoke reactions. The Luther's and Calvin's make the Caraffa's, the Ghislieri's, the Loyola's, the Philip II's. If our Church reject us, let us not recriminate; let us learn to appreciate the amelioration of modern manners, which has made such hatreds impotent; let us console ourselves with the thought of that invisible Church which comprises the excommunicated saints, the best souls of each century. The exiled of a Church are always the *élite;* they are in advance of their time; the heretic of to-day is the orthodox of the future. What, moreover, is the excommunication of men? The heavenly Father only excommunicates barren spirits and selfish hearts. If the priest refuse us burial in his grave-yard, let us forbid our families to demand it. It is God who judges; the Earth is a good mother who shows no preferences; a righteous man's body laid in an unconsecrated corner bears thither his benediction with it.

There are, no doubt, situations where the application of these principles is hard. The spirit blows where it will; the spirit is freedom itself. Now, there are persons fettered in some degree to absolute faith; I mean men in holy orders or ordained to a pastoral charge. Even then a fine soul can find a way out. Some worthy country priest comes, by solitary studies and the purity of his life, to see the impossibilities of literal dogmatism; is it needful that he grieve those whom till now he has consoled, that he explain to the simple changes which they cannot understand? Please God, no! There are not two men in the world who have precisely the same duties. Good Bishop Colenso did an honest deed, such as the Church has not known since its origin, in writing down his doubts as soon as they occurred to him; but the humble Catholic priest, in a land of narrow and timid minds, must hold his peace. Ah! how many discreet tombs planted about village churches thus hide poetic reservations, angelic

silences? Shall those whose duty it has been to speak out equal the merit of those secrets known to God alone?

Theory is not practice. The ideal must remain the ideal; it must fear the soilure of the contact of reality. Thoughts good for those shielded by their noble character from all moral danger may not, if applied, be opportune for those not free from lower qualities. Great things are only achieved by those with strictly settled ideas; for human capacity is a limited thing; the absolutely unprejudiced man would be powerless. Let us enjoy the freedom of the sons of God; but let us beware of being accomplices in the diminution of virtue which would threaten our societies if Christianity became enfeebled. What should we be without it? Who would replace those great schools of seriousness and reverence like Saint Sulpice, the devoted ministry of the Daughters of Charity? How can we fail to be alarmed at the sterility of heart and the pettiness which are invading the world? Our dissidence from those who believe in the positive religions is, after all, simply scientific; in heart we are with them; we have but one foe, and it is also theirs—I mean the vulgar materialism, the baseness of the self-seeking man.

Peace, then, in God's name! Let the diverse orders of mankind live side by side, not falsifying their own genius to make each other reciprocal concessions, which would starve them, but giving each other mutual support. Nothing can reign here below to the exclusion of its opposite; no force ought to have the power to suppress others. Human harmony results from the free utterance of the most discordant notes. Let orthodoxy succeed in slaying science, and we know what will happen; the Mohammedan world and Spain are dying from having too conscientiously fulfilled that task. Let Rationalism propose to govern the world without regard for the soul's religious needs; we have the experience of the French Revolution to teach us the consequences of such a blunder. The æsthetic instinct, carried to the last extreme of delicacy, but lacking righteousness, made the Italy of the Renaissance a den of cut-throats and a brothel. Boredom, stupidity, mediocrity, are the punishment of certain Protestant countries where, on the pretext of good sense and Christian feeling, art has been suppressed and science degraded to puerility. Lucretius and St. Theresa, Aristophanes and Socrates, Voltaire and Francis of Assisi, Raphael and Vincent de Paul, have alike reason to be, and humanity would be the poorer if a single one of the elements which compose it were lacking.

Chapter I.

FORMATION OF THE BELIEFS RELATING TO THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS—THE APPEARANCES AT JERUSALEM

Jesus, although constantly speaking of resurrection and of the new life, had never said quite distinctly that he would rise again in his flesh. The disciples, during the first hours succeeding his death, had no assured hope on this matter. The feelings which they naïvely confide to us even suggest that they believed all to be finished. They wept over and buried their friend, if not as an ordinary dead man, at least as one whose loss was irreparable; they were sad and cast down; the hope which they had cherished of beholding the consummation of Israel's salvation was convicted of vanity; one would call them men who had lost a great and dear illusion.

But love and enthusiasm do not know situations without way of issue. They play with the impossible, and, sooner than relinquish hope, do violence to all reality. Several remarks recalled of the master, those, above all, in which he had foretold his future advent, might be interpreted in the sense that he would come forth from the tomb. Such a belief was, moreover, so natural that the disciples' faith would have sufficed to create it in all completeness. The great prophets, Enoch and Elijah, had not known death. People were even beginning to believe that the patriarchs and chief men of the ancient law were not really dead, and that their bodies were in their sepulchres at Hebron living and animated. In the case of Jesus must have happened what happens for all men who have held captive the attention of their fellows. The world, accustomed to ascribe to them superhuman virtues, cannot admit that they have suffered the unjust, revolting, iniquitous law of the common death. At the moment when Mohammed expired, Omar rushed from his tent, sabre in hand, and declared that he would cleave the head of anyone who would dare to say the prophet was no more. Death is so absurd a thing, when it strikes down the man of genius or the man of great heart, that the people do not believe in the possibility of such an error on the part of nature. The heroes do not die. Is not true existence that which continues for us in the hearts of those who love us? This adored master had for years filled the little world which pressed about him with joy and hope; could they consent to let him rot in the tomb? No; he had lived too long in those about him for them not to affirm after his death that he lived still.

The day following the interment of Jesus (Saturday, 15th of Nisan) was full of such thoughts. All work of the hands was forbidden because of the Sabbath; but never was rest more fruitful. The Christian consciousness has that day but one object, the master laid in the tomb. The women, above all, cover him in spirit with their tenderest caresses. Not for an instant do their thoughts forsake that gentle friend, asleep in his myrrh, whom the wicked have slain! Ah! no doubt the angels flock about him and veil their faces in his shroud. He indeed said that he would die, that his death should be the salvation of the sinner, that he would live again in the kingdom of his Father. Yes, he shall live again; God will not leave his Son to be

a prey for hell; he will not suffer his holy one to see corruption. Of what avail the stone of the sepulchre that lies heavy upon him? He will raise it up and ascend to his Father, whence he descended. And we shall behold him still; we shall hear his entrancing voice; we shall enjoy his discourse anew; and it is in vain that they shall have slain him.

Belief in the immortality of the soul, which, under the influence of Greek philosophy, became a dogma of Christianity, permits a ready acceptance of death, since the dissolution of the body, on this hypothesis, is but a deliverance of the soul, freed henceforth from the galling bonds lacking which it can still exist. But this theory of man, regarded as an amalgam of two substances, was not quite clear to the Jews. The reign of God and the reign of the spirit consisted for them in the complete transformation of the world and the annihilation of death. To admit that death could be victorious over Jesus, over him who came to destroy its empire, was the pitch of absurdity. The very idea that he was capable of suffering had formerly revolted his disciples. They had, then, no choice between despair and a heroic affirmation. A shrewd man might have predicted from the Saturday that Jesus would live again. The little Christian group performed that day the true miracle; it resuscitated Jesus in its heart by the intense love it bore him. It decided that Jesus should not die. Love in those passionate souls was truly stronger than death, and as it is the property of passion to be contagious, to give light like a torch to a feeling which resembles it, and then to go on propagating itself indefinitely, Jesus is, in a sense, already resuscitated at the hour that we have now reached. Let an insignificant material fact permit the belief that his body is no longer here below, and the dogma of the resurrection is founded for eternity.

This was what happened under circumstances which, notwithstanding their partial obscurity, owing to the incoherency, and, more especially, the contradictions, of the traditions, are nevertheless to be realised with a sufficient degree of probability.

Very early on the Sunday morning the Galilean women who, on the Friday evening had hurriedly embalmed the body, betook themselves to the tomb where it had been temporarily deposited. These were Mary Magdalene, Mary Cleophas, Salome, Joanna the wife of Chuza, and others still. They probably came separately; for if it be difficult to call in question the tradition of the three Synoptic Gospels, according to which several women came to the tomb, it is certain, on the other hand, that, in the two most authentic narratives which we have of the resurrection, Mary Magdalene alone plays a part. In any case she had, at that solemn hour, an incomparable share in what took place. It is she whom we must follow step by step; since that day, for the space of one hour, she sustained the whole travail of the Christian conscience; her testimony decided the faith of the future.

Let us recall that the tomb in which had been shut the body of Jesus was a cave recently cut out in the rock, and situated in a garden near the place of execution. It had been selected entirely for that last reason, seeing that it was late and that there was a wish not to violate the Sabbath. Alone, the first Gospel adds one detail: that the tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathæa. But, as a rule, the anecdotal data added by the first Gospel to the common stock of tradition are of no value, especially as regards the latter days of the life of Jesus. The same Gospel mentions another circumstance, which, considering the silence of the others, has no probability; this is the detail of seals and a guard being put upon the tomb. Let us also bear in mind that the funeral caves were low chambers vertically cut in a sloping rock. The door, usually opening downwards, was closed by a very heavy stone which fitted in a rebate. These chambers had no lock; the weight of the stone was the sole protection against thieves or profaners

of tombs; it was therefore arranged in such a way that to move it mechanical force or the combined effort of several persons was necessary. All traditions agree that the stone had been put into the orifice of the cave on the Friday evening.

But when Mary Magdalene arrived on the Sunday morning, the stone was not in its place. The tomb was open. The body was no longer there. The idea of resurrection was still rudimentary in her. What filled her soul was tender regret and desire to bestow the last cares on the body of her divine friend. So her first feelings were those of surprise and grief. The disappearance of that cherished body robbed her of the last joy on which she had counted. No more would she touch him with her hands!.....And what had become of him?.....The idea of a profanation occurred to her, and it revolted her. Perhaps, at the same moment, a gleam of hope passed across her spirit. Without losing a moment, she ran to a house where were Peter and John. "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb," she said, "and we know not where they have laid him."[1]

The two disciples rose in haste and ran with all their might. John, the younger of the two, arrived first. He stooped to look inside. Mary was right. The tomb was empty. The linen used for the interment was scattered about it. Peter arrived in his turn. Both entered, examined the linen clothes, no doubt stained with blood, and in particular remarked the napkin which had enveloped the head, rolled up apart and in a corner. Peter and John returned home, sorely troubled. If they did not yet pronounce the decisive word, "He is risen!" it can at least be said that such a consequence was inevitable, and that the generating dogma of Christianity was already established.

Peter and John having left the garden, Mary remains alone by the side of the tomb. She weeps bitterly. A single thought possesses her: where have they put the body? Her woman's heart does not go beyond the desire to hold the beloved corpse in her arms once more. Suddenly she hears a slight sound behind her. A man is standing there. She takes him for the gardener at first: "Sir," she says, "if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."[1] For all response she hears herself called by her name: "Mary!" It is the voice that has so often thrilled her; it is the accents of Jesus that fall on her ear. "O my Master!" she cries. She wishes to touch him. A kind of instinctive movement makes her stoop to kiss his feet. The vision turns aside and says: "Touch me not." Little by little the shadow disappears. But the miracle of love is achieved. What Cephas could not do Mary has done; she has had power to draw life and sweet and penetrating speech from the empty tomb. There are no more consequences to deduce or conjectures to form. Mary has seen and heard. The resurrection has its first immediate witness.

Crazed with love, intoxicated with joy, Mary returned to the town, and, to the first disciples that she met, exclaimed: "I have seen him; he has spoken to me." Her much disordered imagination, her broken, incoherent speech, made some take her for a mad woman. Peter and John, for their part, told what they had seen. Other disciples went to the tomb and saw the same. The settled conviction of all this first group was that Jesus had risen again. Many doubts still lingered, but the assurance of Mary, Peter, and John imposed itself on the others. Later, this was called "the vision of Peter." Paul, in particular, does not speak of the vision of Mary, and attributes all the honour of the first appearance to Peter. But this statement was very inexact. Peter only saw the empty cave, the napkin, and the shroud.

[1] John xx. 2.

[1] John xx. 15.

Mary alone loved strongly enough to transcend nature and quicken the phantom of the peerless master. In miraculous crises of this nature to see after others have seen is nothing; all the merit is in being the first to see, for the others model their vision on the type received. It is the property of fine temperaments to conceive the image promptly, appropriately, and with a kind of inward sense of design. The glory of the resurrection belongs, then, to Mary Magdalene. After Jesus, it is Mary who has done most for the foundation of Christianity. The shade that Mary's subtle senses created hovers over the world still. Queen and patron saint of idealists, the Magdalene has better than any other been able to affirm her dream, to impose on all the divine vision of her impassioned soul. Her great womanly affirmation, "He is risen!" has been the basis of mankind's faith. Avaunt, impotent reason! Seek not to apply a cold analysis to this masterpiece of idealism and love. If wisdom declines to console this poor, fate-betrayed human race, let madness make the attempt! Where is the sage who has given the world so much joy as the woman possessed, Mary Magdalene?

The other women, however, who had been at the tomb, spread diverse reports. They had not seen Jesus; but they spoke of one in white whom they had perceived in the cave, and who had said to them: "He is not here: return ye into Galilee; there he shall go before you, there ye shall see him."[1] It was perhaps the white shrouds which had given rise to this hallucination. Perhaps also they saw nothing at all, and only began to speak of their vision when Mary Magdalene had told hers. According to one of the most authentic texts, in fact, they kept silence for some time, a silence afterwards ascribed to terror. However this may be, these stories waxed greater hourly, and suffered strange distortions. The man in white became the angel of God; it was related that his garment was dazzling as snow, his face as a lightning flash. Others spoke of two angels, one of whom appeared at the head, the other at the foot, of the tomb. By the evening perhaps many people already believed that the women had seen this angel descend from heaven and roll aside the stone, and Jesus soar forth with a great noise. They themselves, no doubt, varied in their accounts; submitting to the imagination of others, as common people always do, they lent themselves to all embellishments, and participated in the creation of the legend which was being born around them and concerning them.

The day was stormy and decisive. The little band was much dispersed. Some had already departed for Galilee; others, out of dread, were in hiding. The deplorable scene of the Friday, the harrowing spectacle they had had before their eyes, in seeing him of whom so much had been hoped end upon the gibbet, without his Father coming to deliver him, had, moreover, shaken the faith of many. In several quarters the tidings given by the women and by Peter met only scarce concealed incredulity. Different stories jostled one another; the women went here and there with strange, discordant reports, outbidding each other in marvels. The most opposed feelings came to light. Some still wept the mournful event of the day before yesterday; others already exulted; all were eager to accept the most extraordinary tales. However, the distrust inspired by Mary Magdalene's frenzy, the little authority possessed by the women, the incoherence of their accounts, caused great doubts. Men waited expectant of new visions, which could not fail to come. The state of the sect was entirely favourable to the propagation of strange rumours. Had all the little Church been united, legendary creation would have been impossible; those who knew the secret of the disappearance of the corpse would probably

[1] Matt. xxviii. 6-7; Mark xvi. 7; Luke xxiv. 6-7.

have protested against error. But, in the confusion which prevailed, the way was open for the most fertile misunderstandings.

It is the property of the spiritual conditions, in which ecstasy and visions are born, to be contagious. The history of all great religious crises proves that visions of this kind communicate with each other; in an assembly of persons filled with the same beliefs, it suffices for one member of the group to assert that he sees or hears something supernatural for the others to see and hear it too. Among the persecuted Protestants the rumour spread that the angels had been heard singing psalms over the ruins of a recently destroyed temple; all flocked to the spot and heard the same psalm. In cases of this nature it is those most heated with enthusiasm who make the law and set the degree of the common temperature. The exaltation of the few is transmitted to all; no one is willing to remain in the background or admit that he is less favoured than others. Those who see nothing are led away, and end by believing either that they are less clairvoyant or that they do not take account of their own sensations; in any case, they take care not to avow it: they would be killjoys at the feast, dishearten the others, and give themselves a very unpleasant part to play. When there is an apparition in such assemblages, it is usual then for all to see and accept it. We must remember, moreover, the degree of intellectual culture of the disciples of Jesus. What is called a weak head well accords with an exquisite goodness of heart. The disciples believed in ghosts; they imagined miracles on every side; they in no degree participated in the positive science of the time. That science existed in some hundreds of men, scattered about only in countries into which Greek culture had penetrated. But the vulgar in all lands shared very little therein. Palestine was, in this respect, one of the most backward countries; the Galileans were the most ignorant of the Palestinians, and the disciples of Jesus could count among them some of the simplest people in Galilee. It was this very simplicity which had brought them their heavenly election. In such a world belief in marvellous happenings found the most extraordinary facilities for diffusion. Once the idea of the resurrection of Jesus was noised abroad, numerous visions were bound to occur. And, as a matter of fact, they did occur.

On the very Sunday, at an advanced hour of the forenoon, when the statements of the women were already in circulation, two disciples, one of whom was called Cleopatros or Cleopas, undertook a little journey to a town named Emmaus, situated a short distance from Jerusalem. They talked to each other of the last events, and were full of sadness. On the road an unknown companion joined them, and asked the cause of their grief. "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem," they said to him, "and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? Hast thou not heard the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him? But we hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel. Yea, and beside all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover, certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it so even as the women had said; but him they saw not."[1] The unknown was a pious man, versed in the Scriptures, quoting Moses and the prophets. These three worthy persons struck up a friendship. Near Emmaus, as the stranger was going to continue his route, the two disciples besought him to

[1] Luke xxiv. 18-24.

share their evening repast with them. The day wore on; the memories of the two disciples then became more poignant. It was that hour of the evening meal which all recalled with most charm and melancholy. How often had they seen at that moment the beloved master forget the burden of the day in the abandonment of gay converse, and, inspired by a few drops of generous wine, speak to them of the fruit of the vine which he would drink new with them in his Father's kingdom! The gesture which he used to make in breaking the bread and offering it to them, as was the custom of the head of the house among the Jews, was profoundly graven on their memory. Full of a gentle sadness, they forget the stranger; it is Jesus himself whom they see holding the bread, then breaking and offering it to them. These recollections possess them to such a point that they scarce perceive that their companion, in haste to continue his journey, has left them. And when they emerge from their reverie: "Felt we not something strange?" they say to each other. "Dost thou not recall how our hearts burned within us while he spoke with us in the way?" "And the prophecies he repeated proved well that the Messiah must needs suffer to enter into glory. Didst thou not know him at the breaking of the bread?" "Yes, our eyes were shut till then; they were opened when he vanished." The two disciples' conviction is that they have seen Jesus. They return in all haste to Jerusalem.

Just at that moment the principal group of the disciples was assembled with Peter. The night had now fallen. Each gave his impressions and told what he had heard. Already the general belief would have it that Jesus had risen again. On the entrance of the two disciples they were hastily told of what was called "the vision of Peter." They, for their part, related what had befallen them on the road, and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread. The imagination of all was keenly excited. The doors were shut, for they feared the Jews. Eastern towns are hushed after sunset. The silence then was at moments very profound in the room; every little chance sound was interpreted in the sense of the universal expectance. As a rule, expectance creates its object. During an instant of silence some light breath passed over the faces of those present. At such critical hours a current of air, a creaking window, a chance murmur, fixes the belief of peoples for centuries. At the moment that the breath was felt they believed they heard sounds. Some said they had recognised the word *shalom*, "blessing" or "peace." It was the usual greeting of Jesus and the word by which he made his presence known. No doubt was possible: Jesus was present; he was there in the assemblage. It was his beloved voice; each could recognise it. This imagination was the easier to accept since Jesus had told them that, whenever they were gathered together in his name, he would be in the midst of them. It was then an accepted fact that on the Sunday evening Jesus had appeared before his assembled disciples. Some claimed to have noticed in his hands and feet the mark of the nails, and in his side the wound inflicted by the spear. According to a widely-diffused tradition, it was on that very evening that he breathed the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. The idea, at least, that his breath had passed over the assembly was generally admitted.

Such were the incidents of the day which fixed the fate of humanity. The opinion that Jesus had risen from the dead was then founded irrevocably. The sect which men had thought to extirpate by slaying the master was thenceforth assured of a mighty future.

Some doubts, however, were still manifested. The Apostle Thomas, who had been absent from the meeting of Sunday evening, avowed that he envied those who had seen the marks of the spear and the nails. It was said that eight days later he was satisfied; but there rested on him a slight stain, and,

as it were, a gentle reproach. By an instinctive insight exquisitely just, it was comprehended that the ideal should not be touched with hands, that it had no need of the test of experience. *Noli me tangere* is the motto of all great affections. Touch leaves nothing to faith; even the eye, an organ purer and nobler than the hand—the eye which nothing sullies and by which nothing is sullied—soon becomes a superfluous witness. A singular feeling began to come to light; all hesitation seemed a lack of loyalty and love; men felt ashamed to hang back; the desire to see was forbidden. The saying, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,"[1] summed up the situation. It was held more generous to believe without proof. True-hearted friends did not wish they had had a vision, even as, later, St. Louis refused to witness an ecclesiastical miracle, that he might not be robbed of the merit of faith. There was thenceforth a fearful emulation and, as it were, a kind of competition in credulity. Merit consisting in believing without having seen, faith at all hazards, gratuitous faith, faith reaching the limits of madness, was exalted as the first of the soul's gifts. The *credo quia absurdum* is established; the law of Christian dogmas will be a strange progression which will pause before no impossibility. A kind of chivalrous sentiment will prevent any backward glance. The dogmas dearest to piety, those to which it will cling with most frenzy, will be those most repugnant to reason, as a consequence of that touching idea that the moral value of faith increases in ratio to the difficulty of believing, and that no proof of any love is made in admitting what is clear.

These first days, then, were like a stage of intense fever, in which the faithful, intoxicating one another and mutually imposing their dreams, dragged each other along, and soared to the most exalted ideas. The visions were being constantly multiplied. The evening assemblies were the usual occasions for their taking place. When the doors were shut and all were possessed with their fixed idea, the first who thought he heard the gentle word *shalom*, "greeting" or "peace," gave the signal. All listened, and they soon heard it, too. There was then great joy for these simple souls in knowing that their master was in the midst of them. Each tasted the sweetness of the thought, and believed himself favoured by some inward colloquy. Other visions were copied from another model, and recalled that of the travellers of Emmaus. At the moment of repast Jesus was seen to appear, to take the bread, to bless it, break it, and offer it to him to whom he granted the vision. In the course of a few days an entire cycle of narratives, very divergent in detail, but inspired by an identical spirit of love and absolute faith, formed and spread. It is the gravest error to suppose that legend requires much time to make its way. A legend is sometimes born in a day. On the Sunday evening (16th of Nisan, April 5th), the resurrection of Jesus was held as a reality. Eight days later the nature of the life after death, which believers were led to conceive for him, was settled in all its essential features.

[1] John xx. 29.

Chapter II.

DEPARTURE OF THE DISCIPLES FROM JERUSALEM—THE SECOND GALILEAN LIFE OF JESUS

The keenest desire of those who have lost some one dear to them is to look again upon the places where they have lived with him. It was no doubt this feeling which, some days after the events of the Passover, led the disciples to return to Galilee. From the moment that Jesus was arrested, and immediately after his death, it is probable that several had already set out for the provinces of the North. At the moment of the resurrection a rumour spread abroad, according to which it was in Galilee that he should be seen again. Some of the women who had been at the tomb returned, saying that the angel had told them that Jesus had already preceded them to Galilee. Others said that it was Jesus who had ordered that they should betake themselves thither. At times there was even a belief that he had said so in his lifetime. What is certain is that at the end of some days, perhaps after the complete accomplishment of the Passover feasts, the disciples believed they had a command to return into their own country, and, in point of fact, did return thither. Perhaps the visions began to flag in Jerusalem. A kind of home-sickness seized upon them. The brief appearances of Jesus were insufficient to compensate for the great blank caused by his absence. They dreamt with a melancholy craving of the lake and of the beautiful mountains, where they had tasted of the kingdom of God. The women, above all, wished at all costs to return to the land where they had enjoyed so much happiness. It is to be noted that the order to set forth came more especially from them. This loathsome city weighed them down; they aspired to look again upon the soil where they had possessed him whom their hearts loved, well assured beforehand of meeting him there yet again.

The majority of the disciples accordingly departed, full of joy and hope, possibly in the company of the caravan which took back pilgrims from the feast of the Passover. What they hoped to find in Galilee was not merely fleeting visions; it was Jesus himself constantly with them, as before his death. A mighty expectance filled their souls. Was he to make new the kingdom of Israel, to found once and for all the reign of God, and, as was said, "to reveal his justice"? All was possible. Already they pictured the smiling landscapes where they had possessed him. Many believed he had appointed a meeting with them upon a mountain, probably the same as that to which their tenderest memories were attached. Never, doubtless, was journey more joyous. It was all their dreams of happiness which were on the eve of being realised. Soon they were again to behold him!

They did see him again, in fact. Scarce given over to their peaceful fantasies, they believed themselves back in the Gospel period at its prime. It was about the end of the month of April. The earth then is spangled with red anemones, which are probably those "lilies of the field" from which Jesus loved to draw comparisons At every step his words returned to memory, as though attached to the thousand features of the road. Here is the tree, the

flower, the seed, from which he drew his parable; there the hill where he spoke his most touching discourses; there the boat from which he taught. It was like a beautiful dream recommenced, an illusion that had been lost and was found. Enchantment seemed born anew. The peaceful Galilean "kingdom of God" resumed its course. The translucent air, the mornings on the shore or the mountain, the nights of fishing spent on the lake—all were found again, and pregnant with visions. They saw him wheresoever they had lived with him. No doubt the joy of possession was not to be felt at every hour. The lake must sometimes have seemed very lonely. But great love is content with little. If every one of us, once a year and secretly, could behold again for an instant, long enough to exchange two words, the beloved whom we have lost, death would be no longer death!

Such was the spiritual condition of the faithful flock during this short period, when Christianity seemed for a moment to return to its cradle to bid it an eternal farewell. The chief disciples, Peter, Thomas, Nathanaël, the sons of Zebedee, found themselves again on the shore of the lake, and thenceforth lived together; they resumed their old trade of fishermen at Bethsaïda or Capernaum. The Galilean women were, no doubt, in their company. More than anyone else they had urged this return, which for their hearts was a necessity. It was their final act in the foundation of Christianity. Henceforth we catch no further glimpse of them. Faithful to their love, they wished no more to leave the land where they had tasted their great joy. They were quickly forgotten, and, as Galilean Christianity had scarce any posterity, their memory was lost completely in certain branches of tradition. Those pathetic demoniacs, those converted sinners, those true founders of Christianity—Mary Magdalene, Mary Cleophas, Joanna, Susannah—became saints forsaken. St. Paul knew nothing of them. The faith which they had created almost put them in the shade. We must come down to the Middle Ages to find justice done them; one of them, Mary Magdalene, then resumed her high place in the Christian heaven.

Many appear to have been present at the visions on the shore of the lake. On those waves where they had touched God, how could the disciples have failed to behold their divine friend again? The most ordinary circumstances gave him back to them. Once they had fished all night without catching a single fish; suddenly the nets filled; it was a miracle. It seemed to them that someone had called from the land: "Cast your nets to the right." Peter and John looked at one another: "It is the Lord," said John. Peter, who was naked, girt himself hastily with his coat and threw himself into the sea to go and rejoin the invisible counsellor. At other times Jesus came to share their simple repasts. One day, on landing from fishing, they were surprised to find a fire of coals, fish laid thereon, and bread beside it. A poignant memory of their feasts of the past crossed their minds. The bread and fish were always an essential part of the meal. Jesus had been accustomed to offer it to them. They were persuaded after the repast that Jesus had seated himself at their side and presented them with these viands, which had already become for them eucharistic and sacred.

It was especially John and Peter who were favoured by these intimate meetings with the beloved phantom. One day Peter, perhaps in a dream (but what do I say! Was not their whole life upon those shores a perpetual dream?), heard Jesus ask: "Lovest thou me?" The question was thrice repeated. Peter, entirely possessed with sad and tender emotion, imagined that he replied: "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee"; and each time the apparition said: "Feed my lambs."[1] On another occasion Peter confided to John a strange dream. He had dreamt that he was

[1] John xxi. 15–16.

walking with the master, John following a few paces behind. Jesus spoke to him in very obscure terms, which seemed to foretell for him prison or a violent death, and repeated several times: "Follow me." Peter then, pointing to John, who was following them, asked: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" "If I will that he tarry till I come," said Jesus, "what is that to thee? Follow thou me."[1] After the martyrdom of Peter, John recalled this dream, and in it saw a prediction of the nature of his friend's death. He told it to his disciples, and they believed that they found therein an assurance that their master would not pass away before the final advent of Jesus.

These grand melancholy dreams, this converse unceasingly interrupted and recommenced with the beloved dead, filled days and months. Galilee's sympathy with the prophet whom the Hierosolymites had put to death had awakened. More than five hundred persons were already rallied round the memory of Jesus. For lack of the lost master, they gave obedience to the most authoritative of his disciples, Peter above all. One day, when, following in the steps of their spiritual chiefs, the faithful Galileans had climbed one of those mountains where Jesus had often led them, they believed they saw him once more. The atmosphere on those heights is full of strange mirages. The same illusion, which had formerly occurred for the more intimate disciples, was manifested again. The assembled multitude imagined they saw the divine phantom delineated in the ether; all fell on their faces and worshipped. The feeling inspired by the transparent horizon of those mountains is the idea of the amplitude of the world and the longing to conquer it. On one of the surrounding peaks Satan, displaying the kingdoms of the earth in all their glory to Jesus, was said to have offered them to him if he would only bow down to him. This time it was Jesus who, from the height of the sacred summits, showed his disciples the whole earth and assured them of the future. They descended from the mountain, convinced that the Son of God had commanded them to convert the human race, and had promised to be with them to the end of ages. A strange ardour, a divine fire, filled them when they came away from these meetings. They deemed themselves the missionaries of the world, capable of all marvels. St. Paul saw several of those present at this extraordinary scene. After twenty-five years had elapsed their impressions were still as strong and fresh as on the first day.

Nearly a year went by of this life, hovering between heaven and earth. The charm, far from decreasing, grew. It is the property of great and holy things ever to expand and to be purified. Feeling for one that we have loved and lost is much more fruitful at a distance than on the morrow of his death. The more remote we get the more vigorous this feeling becomes. The sadness which at first mingled with it and, in a sense, diminished it, changes to serene piety. The image of the departed is transfigured, idealised, becomes the soul of life, the principle of all action, the source of all joy, the oracle to which we appeal, the consolation which we seek in moments of dejection. Death is the condition of every apotheosis. Jesus, so loved during his life, was much more so after he drew his last breath; or, rather, his last breath marked the beginning of his true life in the bosom of his Church. He became the inward friend, the confidant, the travelling companion, he who at a turning of the road joins you, walks with you, sits at table with you, and then makes himself known to you as he disappears. The absolute lack of scientific rigour in the minds of the new believers precluded any question as to the nature of his existence. He was represented as impassible, furnished with a subtle body, passing through opaque partitions, now visible, now invisible, but always alive. It was sometimes thought that

[1] John xxi. 19-22.

his body had no substance, that it was purely a shadow or appearance. At other times he was attributed substance, flesh, and bones by a naïve scrupulosity, and, as though the apparition had wished to take precautions against itself, he was made to eat and drink; they wished to allow him the power of touch. Ideas on this point floated in the most complete uncertainty.

Up till now we have scarcely dreamed of putting an idle and unanswerable question. While Jesus was rising again in the true way—that is to say, in the hearts of those who loved him; while the unshakable conviction of the Apostles was in formation, and the faith of the world was being prepared, in what spot were the worms consuming the inanimate corpse which had been bestowed in the sepulchre on the Saturday evening? On this point we shall always be ignorant, for, naturally, Christian traditions can inform us nothing thereon. It is the spirit which quickens; the flesh is nought. The resurrection was the triumph of the idea over reality. Once the idea has entered into its immortality, what matters the body?

About the year 80 or 85, when the present text of the first Gospel received its last additions, the Jews already had a settled opinion on this subject. If they were to be believed, the disciples had come during the night and stolen the corpse. The Christian conscience took alarm at this rumour, and, to nullify such an objection, it imagined the detail of the watchmen and the seal put upon the sepulchre. This circumstance being only to be found in the first Gospel, mingled with legends of very inadequate authority, is in no respect admissible. But the explanation of the Jews, while irrefutable, is far from accounting for all. It can scarce be admitted that those who so strongly believed Jesus had risen again were those who had carried off the corpse. However inexact such men's reflections were, it would be hard to imagine so singular a delusion. We must remember that at this time the little Church was completely dispersed. There was no mutual understanding, no centralisation, no regular means of publicity. Beliefs were born in a scattered fashion, then united with each other as they could. The contradictions between the narratives which remain to us of the incidents of Sunday morning prove that the rumours spread by very diverse channels, and that little care was taken to make them mutually consistent. It is possible that the body may have been taken away by some of the disciples and carried to Galilee. The others, remaining at Jerusalem, would not have had knowledge of what had been done. From another point of view, the disciples who had taken the body to Galilee would not at first have any acquaintance with the stories which sprang up at Jerusalem, so that the belief in the resurrection would have formed behind them, and would then have surprised them. They would not have protested, and, even if they had, it would have unsettled nothing. In the case of miracles a tardy correction is null and void. Never does a material difficulty prevent an emotion from developing and from creating the fictions of which it has need. In the recent matter of the miracle at La Salette errors have been demonstrated even to the point of legal evidence; but that does not prevent the basilica being raised on the spot and faith flocking thither.

It is also permissible to suppose that the disappearance of the body was due to the Jews. Perhaps they believed that, by so doing, they would obviate the tumultuous scenes which might break forth over the corpse of a man so popular as Jesus. Perhaps they wished to prevent clamorous funeral rites, or the erection of a tomb to this just man. Finally, who knows if the removal of the body were not the act of the owner of the garden or of the gardener? This owner, to all appearance, was foreign to the sect. His cave was chosen because it was the nearest to Golgotha, and time was pressing. Perhaps he was annoyed

at this appropriation, and had the body taken out. Truth to say, the details supplied by the fourth Gospel, of the shrouds left in the tomb and the napkin carefully folded up in a corner aside, scarcely accord with such a hypothesis. This last circumstance would make one suspect the presence of a woman's hand. The five narratives of the women's visit to the tomb are so confused and entangled that it is certainly very permissible for us to suppose that they hide some misunderstanding. The feminine consciousness, under the domination of passion, is capable of the most grotesque illusions. It is often the accomplice in its own dreams. To bring about the kind of incidents deemed marvellous, nobody deliberately deceives; but everyone, without being conscious of it, is impelled to connive at it. Mary Magdalene had, in the language of the time, been "possessed by seven devils." In all this we must needs take account of the little exactness of mind of Eastern women, of their absolute lack of education, and of the peculiar tinge of their sincerity. Exalted conviction makes all self-examination impossible. When one sees heaven everywhere, one is inclined at moments to put oneself in the place of heaven.

Let us draw a veil over these mysteries. In times of religious crisis, all being deemed divine, the greatest effects may proceed from the most paltry causes. Had we witnessed the strange incidents which are at the source of all the works of faith, we should detect circumstances which would not appear to us proportionate to the importance of the results; others which would make us smile. Our old cathedrals count among the most beautiful things in the world; one cannot enter them without being, in a sense, intoxicated with the infinite. And yet these splendid marvels are nearly always the blossoming of some petty deceit. And, after all, what matters it in the end? The result alone counts in such a matter. Faith purifies all. The material cause which made belief in the resurrection was not the true cause of the resurrection. What resuscitated Jesus was love. That love was so potent that a trivial chance sufficed to raise the edifice of the universal faith. Had Jesus been less loved, had faith in the resurrection had less right to be established, chances of that kind would have happened in vain; nothing would have come of them. A grain of sand brings about the fall of a mountain when the moment has come for the mountain to fall. The greatest things come at once from causes that are very great and causes that are very little. The great causes are alone real; the little do no more than determine the production of an effect long since in preparation

Chapter III.

RETURN OF THE APOSTLES TO JERUSALEM— END OF THE PERIOD OF VISIONS

The visions, however, as happens in movements of enthusiastic credulity, began to flag. Popular imaginations resemble contagious diseases: they are quickly blunted, and change their form. The energy of fervent souls was already turned in another direction. What they believed they had heard from the mouth of the dear risen master was the command to go before him, to preach, to

convert the world. Where was a beginning to be made? Naturally, at Jerusalem. The return to Jerusalem was then resolved upon by those who at this time directed the sect. As such journeys were usually made in a caravan at the period of the feasts, it may be reasonably supposed that the return in question took place at the feast of Tabernacles of the close of 33, or at the Passover of 34.

Galilee was thus forsaken by Christianity, and forsaken for ever. The little Church which remained there no doubt still endured, but we hear no more of it. It was probably crushed out of existence, like everything else, by the terrible disaster which the country suffered at the time of the war of Vespasian; the remnants of the scattered community took refuge beyond the Jordan. After the war it was not Christianity that returned to Galilee; it was Judaism. In the second, third, and fourth centuries Galilee was an entirely Jewish country, the centre of Judaism, the home of the Talmud. Thus Galilee counted for but an hour in the history of Christianity; but it was *par excellence* the divine hour; it gave the new religion what has made it endure, its poetry, its penetrating charm. The "Gospel" in the fashion of the Synoptics was a Galilean work. And we shall attempt to show later that the "Gospel," thus understood, was the principal cause of the success of Christianity, and remains the surest pledge of its future.

It is probable that a portion of the little school surrounding Jesus in his last days had remained at Jerusalem. At the moment of separation belief in the resurrection was already established. This belief thus developed in two directions with a sensibly varying aspect, and such, no doubt, is the cause of the complete divergences which are to be remarked in the narratives of the appearances. Two traditions, one Galilean, the other Hierosolymite, were formed: according to the first, all the apparitions (save those of the first instance) had taken place in Galilee; according to the second, all had taken place in Jerusalem. The agreement of the two parts of the little Church on the fundamental dogma naturally only confirmed the common belief. They embraced each other in the same faith; they repeated with effusion, "He is risen!" Perhaps the joy and enthusiasm which resulted from this meeting brought about some other visions. It is about this time that we must date "the vision of James," mentioned by St. Paul. James was a brother, or at least a relative, of Jesus. It does not appear that he was in the company of Jesus in his last sojourn at Jerusalem. Probably he came thither with the Apostles when the latter left Galilee. All the great Apostles had had their vision; it was hard that this "brother of the Lord" should not have his. It was, apparently, a eucharistic vision—that is to say, one in which Jesus appeared taking and breaking the bread. Later, the portions of the Christian family which adhered to James, those who were called Hebrews, transferred this vision to the very day of the resurrection, and maintained it to have been the first of all.

It is, indeed, very remarkable that the family of Jesus, some members of which had in his lifetime been incredulous and hostile to his mission, now formed part of the Church and occupied a very high place therein. There is reason to suppose that the reconciliation was effected during the stay of the Apostles in Galilee. The renown which had suddenly attached to the name of their relative, those five hundred people who believed in him and asserted that they had seen him risen again, might make an impression on their minds. From the time of the Apostles finally settling in Jerusalem we see with them Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus. So far as Mary is concerned, it appears that John, in the belief that he so obeyed an injunction of his Master, had adopted her and taken her with him. He, perhaps, brought her to Jerusalem. This woman, whose rôle and personal character have remained profoundly obscure,

thenceforward acquired importance. The speech which the evangelist puts in the mouth of an unknown woman, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck!"[1] began to be verified. It is probable that Mary survived her son few years.

As to the brothers of Jesus, the question is more obscure. Jesus had brothers and sisters. It seems probable, however, that in the class of persons who called themselves "brothers of the Lord" there were relatives in the second degree. The question is only of import in James's case. Was this James the Just, or "brother of the Lord," whom we are about to see playing a very great part in the first thirty years of Christianity, the James, son of Alphæus, who appears to have been either a cousin-german of Jesus or a real brother of Jesus? The data in this matter are quite uncertain and contradictory. What we know of this James presents us with an image of him so remote from that of Jesus that one shrinks from believing that two men so different were born of the same mother. If Jesus was the true founder of Christianity, James was its most dangerous foe; he nearly ruined all by his narrow spirit. Later, it was certainly believed that James the Just was a real brother of Jesus. But perhaps some confusion had arisen on this subject.

However that may be, the Apostles thenceforth never separated save for temporary journeys. Jerusalem became their centre; they seemed to dread dispersal, and certain features apparently reveal in them an anxiety to prevent a new return to Galilee, which would have dissolved the little society. An express command of Jesus was alleged forbidding any departure from Jerusalem, at least until the great manifestations which were looked for. Apparitions became more and more rare. There was much less talk about them, and the belief was beginning to grow that the master would be seen no more before his solemn return in the clouds. Imaginations were eagerly turned to a promise which, it was supposed, Jesus had made. During his lifetime Jesus was said to have often spoken of the Holy Spirit, conceived as a personification of the divine wisdom. He had promised his disciples that this Spirit should be their strength in the struggles they would have to wage, their inspiration in difficulties, their advocate if they had to speak in public. When visions grew rare, men fell back on this Spirit, which was regarded as a comforter, as another self which Jesus was to send to his friends. Sometimes it was imagined that Jesus, suddenly appearing in the midst of his assembled disciples, had breathed upon them from his own mouth a current of life-giving air. At other times the disappearance of Jesus was considered a condition for the coming of the Spirit. It was believed that in his appearances he had promised the descent of this Spirit. Many established an intimate bond between this descent and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. All the energy of imagination which the sect had displayed in creating the legend of the risen Jesus, it was now to apply to the creation of a body of pious beliefs on the descent of the Spirit and on its marvellous gifts.

It seems, however, that yet another great vision of Jesus took place at Bethany or on the Mount of Olives. Certain traditions assigned to this vision the final recommendations, the reiterated promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the decree by which Jesus invested his disciples with the power of remitting sins. The characteristic features of these apparitions became more and more vague; they were confused one with another. In the end people ceased to think more about them. It was accepted that Jesus was alive, that he had manifested himself by a sufficient number of appearances to prove his existence, that he might manifest himself yet again in partial visions up to the time of the great final revelation, when all would be consummated. Thus St.

[1] Luke xi. 27.

Paul represents the vision which he had on the road to Damascus as one of the same order as those just related. In any case, it was admitted, in an idealistic sense, that the master was with his disciples, and would be with them until the end. In the early days, the appearances being very frequent, Jesus was conceived as dwelling upon earth in a continuous fashion, and more or less fulfilling the functions of earthly life. When visions grew rare, people tended to another imagination. They pictured Jesus as having entered into glory, and being seated at the right hand of his Father. "He hath gone up to heaven," they said.

For the majority this saying remained in the condition of a vague image or induction. But for some it was translated into a material scene. It was desired that, following on the last vision common to all the Apostles, at which he gave them his supreme exhortations, Jesus should have ascended to heaven. The scene was developed later, and became a complete legend. It was related that, at the moment when a cloud swallowed him up, heavenly beings appeared, according to the usual stage setting of exceptionally brilliant divine manifestations, and consoled the disciples by an assurance of a return in the clouds, entirely similar to the scene which they had just witnessed. The death of Moses had by the popular imagination been accompanied by circumstances of the same nature. Perhaps also there was some reminiscence of the ascension of Elijah. A tradition located this scene near Bethany, on the summit of the Mount of Olives. This neighbourhood remained very dear to the disciples, no doubt because Jesus had dwelt there.

Legend tells how the disciples, after this marvellous scene, returned to Jerusalem "with great joy." For our own part, it is with sorrow that we bid Jesus the last farewell. To find him living again in his life as a shade has been for us a great consolation. This second life of Jesus, a pale reflection of the first, is still full of charm. But now all perfume of his presence is lost. Ascended on his cloud to the right hand of his Father, he leaves us with men; and how great, O heaven, is the fall! The reign of poetry is at an end. Mary Magdalene, secluded in her country town, is absorbed in her memories. By reason of that eternal injustice which causes man to claim solely as his own the work in which woman has shared as much as he, Cephas eclipses her and makes her forgotten! No more sermons on the mount; no more possessed women healed; no more harlots touched; no more of those strange women colleagues in the work of redemption whom Jesus has not rejected. The god, in truth, has disappeared. The history of the Church is henceforth to be, for the most part, the history of the treasons which the idea of Jesus will suffer. But, such as it is, that history, nevertheless, is a hymn to his glory. The words and the image of the illustrious Nazarene will endure, in the midst of infinite miseries, as a sublime ideal. We shall better understand how great he was when we shall have seen how small were his disciples.

Chapter IV.

DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—ECSTATIC AND PROPHETIC PHENOMENA

Little-minded, narrow, ignorant, inexperienced they were, as much as men can be. Their simplicity of mind was extreme; their credulity had no bounds. But they had one merit: they loved their master even to madness. The memory of Jesus had remained the one motive of their life; it was a perpetual obsession, and it was clear that they would never more live, save in him who for two or three years had so strongly attached and fascinated them. For souls of the secondary rank, who cannot love God directly—that is to say, in seeking truth, creating the beautiful, doing good of themselves—salvation consists in loving one who shines with a reflection of the true, the beautiful, the good. The majority of men require a religion with two grades. The multitude of adorers desire an intermediary between themselves and God.

When someone has succeeded in holding about him several other persons by a high moral bond, and he dies, it invariably happens that the survivors, up till then often divided by rivalries and dissensions, acquire great affection one for the other. A thousand dear images of the past which they regret form among them, as it were, a common treasure. It is one manner of loving the dead man merely to love those with whom we have known him. We seek each other's company to recall the happy days that are no more. A profound saying of Jesus is then found true to the letter: the dead man is present in the midst of those who are united by his memory.

The mutual affection of the disciples in the lifetime of Jesus was thus increased tenfold after his death. They formed a small and very secluded society, and lived exclusively among themselves. Their number at Jerusalem was about one hundred and twenty. Their piety was fervent, and, as yet, comprised in the forms of Jewish piety. The Temple was their great place of devotion. They, no doubt, worked for their living; but manual labour in the Jewish society of that day took up very little time. Everyone had a trade, and this trade was no bar to being an educated and well-bred man. Among us the material needs are so hard to satisfy that the man living by his hands must needs work twelve or fifteen hours a day; only the man of leisure can attend to the things of the spirit; the acquisition of attainments is a rare and expensive matter. But in those ancient societies, of which the East of our own time still affords us an idea, in those climes where nature is so generous to man and so little exacting, the life of the worker allowed him plenty of leisure. A kind of mutual instruction gave everyone an acquaintance with current ideas. Food and clothing sufficed, and a few hours of casual work provided them. The rest of the day was given to dream and passion. Passion had in those souls attained a degree of energy to us inconceivable. The Jews of that period appear to us real enthusiasts, each mechanically obeying the idea that has possessed him.

The dominant idea in the Christian community at the moment we have reached, when visions had ceased, was the coming of the Holy Spirit. Men believed they received it under the form

of a mysterious breath which passed over those present. Several imagined that it was the breath of Jesus himself. Every inward consolation, every courageous impulse, every flash of enthusiasm, every thrill of gentle and joyous cheer, which one felt without knowing whence it came, was the work of the Spirit. As they ever do, those good consciences referred to an external cause the exquisite feelings which were born within them. It was in their assemblages especially that the grotesque phenomena of illuminism took place. When all were gathered together, awaiting in silence the inspiration from on high, some murmur or sound made them believe in the coming of the Spirit. In the early days it was apparitions of Jesus which were manifested in this way. Now, however, the form of ideas was changed. It was the divine breath which passed over the little Church, and filled it with heavenly perfumes.

These beliefs were allied with conceptions derived from the Old Testament. The prophetic spirit is displayed in the Hebrew books as a breath which enters man and exalts him. In Elijah's fine vision God passes by under the semblance of a light wind, which causes a low rustling. In degenerate epochs these old imaginations had led to beliefs very similar to those of the spiritualists of our days. In the *Ascension of Isaiah* the coming of the Spirit is accompanied by a kind of rustling at the doors. More often, however, this coming was conceived as another baptism—namely, the "baptism of the Spirit"—far superior to that of John. Hallucinations of touch being very frequent among persons so neurotic and exalted, the slightest current of air, causing a vibration in the dead silence, was regarded as the passing of the Spirit. One believed he felt it; soon all felt it, and the enthusiasm spread from neighbour to neighbour. The analogy of these phenomena to those to be found in the visionaries of all periods is easy to appreciate. They are of everyday occurrence, in part under the influence of reading the *Acts of the Apostles*, in the English or American sects of Quakers, Jumpers, Shakers, and Irvingites, among the Mormons, and in the "camp-meetings" and "revivals" of America. We have seen them restored among us in the so-called "Spiritualist" sect. But an immense distinction must be drawn between aberrations without significance or future and the illusions which accompanied the establishment of a new religious code for humanity.

Amid all these "descents of the Spirit," which appear to have been fairly frequent, there was one that left a profound impression in the new-born Church. One day, when the brethren were gathered together, a storm broke out. A violent wind blew the windows open; the sky was ablaze. Storms in these countries are attended by an extraordinary liberation of lightning; the atmosphere is as though furrowed with spouts of flame in every direction. Whether the electric fluid penetrated the room itself, or whether a blinding flash suddenly lit up the faces of all, they were convinced that the Spirit had entered, and that it had poured itself forth upon each one's head in the form of tongues of fire. It was a widely-spread opinion in the theurgical schools of Syria that the intervention of the Spirit was effected by a divine fire and under the form of a mysterious light. The disciples believed that they had been in the presence of all the splendours of Sinaï, of a divine manifestation analogous to that of the ancient days. Thenceforth the baptism of the Spirit became a baptism of fire also. The baptism of the Spirit and of fire was opposed, and greatly preferred, to the baptism of water, the only one which John had known. The baptism of fire was only vouchsafed on rare occasions. None save the Apostles and the disciples of the first group were reputed to have received it. But the idea that the Spirit had been shed upon them in the form of shafts of flame, like tongues of fire, gave rise to a series of singular

ideas, which held an important place in the imaginations of the time.

The tongue of the inspired man was supposed to receive a sort of sacrament. It was asserted that several prophets before their mission had been stammerers; that the angel of God had touched their lips with a live coal, which purified them and conferred on them the gift of eloquence. In preaching the man was reputed not to speak of himself. His tongue was regarded as the organ of the Divinity which inspired it. These tongues of fire seemed a striking symbol. There was firm conviction that God had wished to signify thus that he poured out upon the Apostles his most precious gifts of eloquence and inspiration. But the conviction did not stop at this. Jerusalem, like most great Eastern cities, was a very polyglot town. Diversity of languages was one of the obstacles which it presented to a propaganda of a universal character. One of the things, moreover, which most dismayed the Apostles at the opening of a mission destined to be world-wide was the number of languages; they were constantly asking one another how they would learn so many dialects. "The gift of tongues" thus became a sort of miraculous privilege. It was believed that the preaching of the Gospel was freed from the obstruction caused by the diversity of languages. It was imagined that, under solemn circumstances, those present had heard the apostolic preaching, each in his own tongue; in other words, that the apostolic speech was self-translated to each of the hearers. At other times the conception formed was somewhat different. The Apostles were ascribed the gift of knowing by divine infusion all languages and speaking them at will.

There was a liberal idea at the back of this; it was meant to imply that the Gospel has no language of its own, that it may be translated into all tongues, and that the translation is as good as the original. Such was not the sentiment of orthodox Judaism. Hebrew, for the Jew of Jerusalem, was the "holy tongue"; no other could be compared to it. The translations of the Bible were little esteemed; while the Hebrew text was scrupulously preserved, the translators allowed themselves changes and modifications of meaning. The Jews of Egypt and the Hellenists of Palestine practised, it is true, a more tolerant system; they used Greek in prayer, and habitually read the Greek translations of the Bible. But the first Christian conception was wider still; on this conception the word of God has no language of its own; it is free, unhampered by any linguistic fetters; it bestows itself on all spontaneously and without interpreter. The facility with which Christianity broke away from the Semitic dialect spoken by Jesus, the liberty with which, from the first, it left each people to create its own liturgy and its versions of the Bible in its own tongue, resulted from this kind of emancipation of languages. It was generally admitted that the Messiah would lead all tongues, like all peoples, to unity. Common usage and linguistic promiscuity were the first steps towards that great era of universal pacification.

Soon, moreover, the gift of tongues underwent considerable modifications and tended to more extraordinary effects. Mental exaltation brought about ecstasy and prophecy. In ecstatic moments the believer, possessed by the Spirit, uttered inarticulate and incoherent sounds, which were taken for words in a foreign language, naïve attempts being made to interpret them. Sometimes it was believed that the visionary spoke new tongues unknown till then, or even the language of the angels. These grotesque scenes, which led to abuses, only became habitual later. But it is probable that they took place from the earliest years of Christianity. The visions of the ancient prophets had often been accompanied by the phenomena of neurotic excitement. The dithyrambic state of the Greeks involved symptoms of the same order; Pytho used by preference strange or obsolete words, which were called, as in the apostolic phenomenon, *glosses*. Many

of the passwords of primitive Christianity, which are bilingual or formed anagrammatically, such as *Abba pater* and *Anathema Maranatha*, were perhaps products of these grotesque fits, in which were mingled sighs, stifled groans, ejaculations, prayers, and sudden outbursts taken to be prophetic. It was like a vague music of the soul diffused in indistinct sounds, which the hearers sought to translate into positive words and images; or, rather, like prayers of the Spirit, addressed to God in a tongue known to God alone, and which God knew how to interpret. The visionary, indeed, understood nothing of what he said, and was not even conscious of it. He was heard with avidity, and to his incoherent syllables were referred the thoughts of the moment. Each went back to his own dialect, and naïvely sought to explain the unintelligible sounds by what he knew of languages. In this they always succeeded more or less, the hearer putting into the disjointed words what he had in his heart.

The history of the sects of illuminati is rich in facts of the same order. The preachers of the Cevennes afford many cases of "glossolalia." But the most striking case is that of the Swedish "Readers" about 1841–1843. Involuntary utterances, devoid of sense for those who made them, and accompanied by convulsions and swooning, were for long a daily exercise in that little sect. It became quite contagious, and attracted a fairly large popular following. Among the Irvingites the phenomenon of tongues manifested itself with features which reproduce in the most striking manner the stories of the *Acts* and of St. Paul. Our century has beheld other scenes of illusion of the same kind which will not be recalled here; for it is always unfair to compare the credulity inseparable from a great religious movement with the credulity which has as its only cause dulness of intellect.

These strange phenomena sometimes occurred out of doors. Visionaries, at the very moment they were being preyed on by their grotesque illuminations, dared to go forth and show themselves to the crowd. They were taken for drunkards. However sober, so far as mysticism was concerned, Jesus had more than once afforded in his own person the ordinary phenomena of ecstasy. The disciples for two or three years were obsessed with these ideas. Prophetism was frequent, and considered as an analogous gift to that of tongues. Prayer, mingled with convulsions, cadenced modulations, mystic sighs, lyric enthusiasm, and songs of thanksgiving, was a daily exercise. A rich vein of "canticles," "psalms," and "hymns," imitated from those of the Old Testament, was thus opened up. Now mouth and heart sang together; now the heart sang alone, with the inward accompaniment of grace. No tongue being capable of rendering the new sensations produced, they let themselves lapse into an indistinct stammering, at once sublime and puerile, in which what may be called "the Christian language" floated in embryo. Christianity, not finding in the ancient tongues an instrument fitted to its requirements, shattered them. But, while waiting for the new religion to form a language for its use, there were centuries of obscure efforts and, as it were, wailing. The style of St. Paul, and in general of all the New Testament writers, what is it in its manner but the throttled, breathless, formless improvisation of the "glosso lalian"? Language failed them. Like the prophets, they began with the *a-a-a* of the infant. They knew not how to speak. Greek and Semitic alike betrayed them. Hence the monstrous violence which infant Christianity did to language. One would be inclined to call its speech a mumbling in the mouth, the sounds of which stifle and jostle each other, and culminate in a pantomime, confused, but sovereignly expressive.

All this was very far from the ideas of Jesus; but for souls saturated with belief in the supernatural these phenomena had great significance. The gift of tongues, in particular, was deemed an

essential sign of the new religion and a demonstration of its truth. In any case, there resulted great fruits of edification. Many pagans were thereby converted. Up till the third century "glossolalia" was manifested in a manner similar to that described by St. Paul, and was considered as a permanent miracle. Some of the sublime utterances of Christianity have come from these broken sighs. The general effect was touching and thrilling. This habit of making common their inspirations, and giving them over to the interpretation of the community, was to establish between the faithful a profound bond of brotherhood.

Like all the mystics, the new sectaries led a life of fasting and austerity. Like the majority of Eastern people, they ate little, which contributed to maintain them in a state of exaltation. The abstinence of the Syrian, the cause of his physical weakness, puts him in a constant state of fever and nervous susceptibility. Our great continuous mental strains would be impossible on such a regimen. But this cerebral and muscular debility induces, without apparent cause, sharp alternations of sadness and joy, which put the soul in continual communion with God. What was called "godly sorrow"[1] passed for being a divine gift. All the doctrine of such fathers of the spiritual life as John Climacus, as Basil, as Nicus, as Arsenius, all the secrets of the great art of the inward life, one of the most glorious creations of Christianity, were in germ in the strange spiritual condition which those illustrious ancestors of all the "men of desires" passed through in their months of ecstatic expectance. Their moral state was abnormal; they lived in the supernatural. They did nothing save by visions; dreams and the most trivial of circumstances seemed to them warnings from heaven.

Under the name of gifts of the Holy Spirit were thus concealed the rarest, most exquisite effusions of the soul—love, piety, reverent fear, sighs without an aim, sudden langours, spontaneous acts of tenderness. All that is born of good in man, without man taking part therein, was ascribed to a breath from on high. Tears, above all, were held a divine favour. That gracious gift, the privilege of only very good and very pure souls, was manifested with infinite sweetness. We know what strength delicate natures, women above all, draw from the divine faculty of being able to weep much. It is their prayer, their own prayer, and assuredly the holiest of prayers. We must come down to the Middle Ages, to that piety drenched with tears of such as St. Bruno, St. Bernard, and St. Francis of Assisi, to recover the chaste melancholies of those first days, when in truth one sowed in tears to reap in joy. To weep became an act of piety; those who were capable neither of preaching, nor speaking languages, nor doing miracles, wept. There was weeping in prayer, in preaching, in exhorting; it was the advent of the reign of tears. One would have said that souls were dissolved, and would fain, in the absence of a speech that could utter their feelings, have poured them forth by an intense and summary expression of their whole inward being.

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Chapter V.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF JERUSALEM: ITS ENTIRELY MONKISH CHARACTER

The habit of living together, in one faith and in one expectance, necessarily created many common habits. Very early, rules were drawn up, and gave this primitive Church some similarity to monastic establishments such as Christianity knew later. Many of the precepts of Jesus bore in that direction; the true ideal of the Gospel life is a monastery—not a monastery shut in with iron bars, a prison in the style of the Middle Ages, with the two sexes separated; but a refuge in the midst of the world, a precinct reserved for the life of the spirit, a free association or little intimate brotherhood, putting a hedge about it to exclude the cares which corrupt the liberty of the kingdom of God.

All, then, lived in common, having but one heart and one soul. No one possessed aught that was his own. In becoming a disciple of Jesus a man sold all he had and gave the proceeds to the society. The chiefs of the society then distributed the common good to each according to his needs. They dwelt in a single quarter of the town. They took their meals together, and continued to attach to them the mystical significance which Jesus had prescribed. Long hours were passed in prayers. These prayers were sometimes improvised aloud, more often meditated in silence. Ecstasies were frequent, and each believed himself constantly favoured with the divine inspiration. The concord was perfect; there was no quarrel over dogma, no dispute about precedence. The tender memory of Jesus effaced all dissensions. Joy was in all hearts, keen and profound. The morality was austere, but transfused with sweet and tender feeling. They grouped themselves by households to pray and give themselves up to the ecstatic exercises. The recollection of these first two or three years lingered as that of an earthly paradise, which Christianity was thenceforth to pursue in all its dreams, and was vainly to seek to recover. Who cannot perceive, in fact, that such an organisation could only be applied to a very little Church? But, later, the monastic life was on its own account to resume this primitive ideal, which the universal Church was scarce to dream of realising.

It is assuredly possible that the author of the *Acts*, to whom we owe the picture of this early Christendom at Jerusalem, may have accentuated the colours a little, and, in particular, exaggerated the community of goods therein practised. The author of *Acts* is the same as the author of the third Gospel, who, in the life of Jesus, has a way of transforming his facts to suit his theories, and in whom a tendency to the doctrines of Ebionism—that is to say, of absolute poverty—is often very marked. Nevertheless, the narrative of the *Acts* cannot be groundless on this point. Even though Jesus had spoken none of the communistic axioms to be read in the third Gospel, it is certain that renunciation of the goods of this world, and almsgiving carried to the point of self-destitution, were in perfect conformity with the spirit of his preaching. Belief in the approaching end of the world has always produced distaste for the things of the world, and caused life to be lived in common. The narrative of the *Acts* is, moreover, quite in conformity with what we know of the origin of other ascetic religions—of

Buddhism, for example. Religions of this order invariably begin with monastic life. Their first adepts are begging friars of a kind. The layman only appears at a later stage when these religions have conquered whole societies, in which the monastic life can only exist as an exception.

We admit, then, a period of monkish life in the Church of Jerusalem. Two centuries later Christianity still impressed pagans as being a communistic sect. We must bear in mind that the Essenes or Therapeutæ had already provided a model of this kind of life, which very legitimately proceeded from Mosaism. The Mosaic code was essentially moral and not political; its natural product was the social Utopia, the Church, the synagogue, the convent; not the civil State, the nation, the city. Egypt had had, for several centuries, hermits, male and female, supported by the State, probably as an administration of charitable legacies, near Serapeum and Memphis. We must, above all, remember that such a life in the East is in no respect what it is in our West. In the East, nature and existence can be enjoyed very well without possessing aught. Man in those lands is always free, because he has few needs; there the slavery of toil is unknown. We are quite inclined to believe that the communism of the primitive Church may not have been so rigorous and universal as the author of the *Acts* would have it. What is certain is that there was at Jerusalem a great community of poor folk, governed by the Apostles, to which offerings were sent from all points of Christendom. This community was no doubt compelled to lay down somewhat severe rules, and, some years later, it was even necessary, in order to govern it, to have recourse to terror. Terrible legends were in circulation, according to which the simple fact of having kept back something from what was given to the community was represented as a capital crime and punished with death.

The porticoes of the Temple, especially the portico of Solomon which overlooked the valley of Kedron, were the places where the disciples were in the habit of gathering together during the day. There they revived the memory of the hours which Jesus had passed on the same spot. Amid the bustle which prevailed about the Temple they must have attracted little notice. The galleries which formed part of this edifice were the seat of numerous schools and sects, the theatre of endless disputations. The believers in Jesus must, moreover, have passed for very scrupulous devotees; for they still observed the Jewish practices with care, praying at the appointed hours and obeying all the precepts of the law. They were Jews, differing from others only in their belief that the Messiah had already come. People ill-acquainted with their concerns (and these were the vast majority) regarded them as a sect of *hasidim*, or pious folk. One was neither schismatic nor heretical in joining them, any more than one ceases to be a Protestant in becoming a disciple of Spener, or a Catholic in entering the Order of St. Francis or St. Bruno. They were popular because of their piety, their simplicity, and mildness. No doubt the Temple aristocrats looked on them with disfavour. But the sect made little display; it was peaceful, thanks to its obscurity.

In the evening the brethren returned to their own quarter of the town, and took the repast, divided into groups, as a sign of brotherhood and in memory of Jesus, whom they always saw present in their midst. The chief of the table broke the bread, blessed the cup, and made them circulate as a symbol of union in Jesus. Thus the most commonplace act of life became the most august and most holy. These family repasts, always loved by the Jews, were accompanied by prayers and pious outbursts, and informed with a gentle gaiety. The company believed themselves still in the time when Jesus animated them with his presence; they imagined they saw him, and early the report went

that Jesus had said: "Each time that you break the bread, do it in memory of me." The bread itself became, in some sense, Jesus, conceived as the sole source of strength for those who had loved him and still lived by him. These repasts, which were always the chief symbol of Christianity and the soul of its mysteries, at first took place every evening. But soon usage confined them to the Sunday evening. Later, the mystic repast was transferred to the morning. It is probable that, at the moment of their history we have now reached, the ferial day of each week was still the Saturday for Christians.

The Apostles chosen by Jesus, who were supposed to have received from him a special charge to announce to the world the kingdom of God, had, in the little community, an uncontested superiority. One of the first cares, as soon as the little sect was peacefully settled at Jerusalem, was to fill up the vacancy which Judas of Kerioth had left in it. The view that this latter had betrayed his master, and had been the cause of his death, became more and more general. Legend mingled with it, and every day some new circumstance came to light which added to the blackness of his deed. He had bought a field near the old necropolis of Hakeldama, to the south of Jerusalem, and there lived a secluded life. Such was the state of naïve enthusiasm of all the little Church that to replace him it was resolved to have recourse to drawing lots. In great religious emotions this means of coming to a decision is generally preferred, for the principle is thus admitted that nothing is fortuitous, that one is the chief object of the divine attention, and that the part of God in an event is so much the stronger as that of man is the weaker. The only condition was that the candidates should be taken from the group of the oldest disciples, those who had witnessed the whole series of events since the baptism of John. This considerably reduced the number of the eligible. Two only found themselves qualified, Joseph Barsabbas, who bore the name of *Justus*, and Matthias. The lot fell to Matthias, who was thenceforth counted in the number of the Twelve. But this was the only instance of such a substitution. The Apostles were in future conceived as named once for all by Jesus and having no possible successors. The peril of a permanent college, monopolising all the life and strength of the association, was, by a profound instinct, dispelled for a time. The concentration of the Church in an oligarchy only came later.

For the rest we must be forewarned against the misconceptions which this name of "Apostle" can provoke, and to which it has not failed to give rise. From a very early epoch certain passages in the Gospels, and, above all, the analogy of the life of St. Paul, tended to make the Apostles be imagined as essentially wandering missionaries, in a sense sharing the world among them in advance, and passing, like conquerors, over all the kingdoms of the earth. A cycle of legends grew up thereon, and imposed itself on ecclesiastical history. Nothing could be more contrary to truth. The body of the Twelve was habitually resident at Jerusalem; until about the year 60 the Apostles never left the holy city save on temporary missions. This explains the obscurity in which the majority of the members of the central council remained. Very few of them played an active part. It was a kind of sacred college or senate, solely destined to represent tradition and the conservative spirit. In the end the Apostles were relieved of all active functions, so that it only remained for them to preach and pray; and yet the brilliant opportunities of preaching did not fall to them. Their names were scarce known out of Jerusalem, and about the years 70 or 80 the list given of these twelve primitive elect only agreed on the principal names.

The "brothers of the Lord" often appear in company with the "Apostles," though they were distinct from them.

Their authority was at least equal to that of the Apostles. These two groups constituted in the youthful Church a kind of aristocracy, founded solely on the more or less intimate relations which their members had had with the master. They were the men whom Paul called "the pillars" of the Church of Jerusalem. It is clear, however, that the distinctions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were not yet existent. The title was nothing; personal importance was all. The principle of ecclesiastical celibacy was already admitted indeed; but time was needful to bring all these germs to their complete development. Peter and Philip were married, and had sons and daughters.

The term for the assemblage of the faithful was the Hebrew *kahal*, which was translated by the essentially democratic word ἐκκλησία. *Ecclesia* was the convocation of the people in the ancient Greek cities, the gathering at the Pnyx or at the *agora*. From the second or third century B.C. onwards the words of the Athenian democracy became in a measure common terms in the Hellenic tongue; several, owing to their use by the Greek brotherhoods, passed into the Christian language. It was, indeed, the democratic life, restrained for centuries, which was resuming its course under entirely different forms. The primitive Church was a little democracy in its way. Even election by lot, a method so dear to the ancient republics, is occasionally to be found in it. Less severe and less suspicious than the ancient cities, the Church willingly delegated its authority; like every theocratic society, it tended to abdicate its power into the hands of a clergy, and it was easy to foresee that one or two centuries would not elapse before all this democracy turned to oligarchy.

The power ascribed to the united Church and its chiefs was immense. The Church granted all missions, solely following in its choice the guidance of the signs afforded by the Spirit. Its authority extended even to the decreeing of death. It was told how, at Peter's voice, backsliders had fallen down and died on the spot. St. Paul, a little later, did not fear, in excommunicating someone guilty of incest, "to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."[1] Excommunication was held the equivalent of a death sentence. It was not doubted that anyone whom the Apostles or chiefs of the Church had cut off from the body of the saints and given over to the power of evil, was lost. Satan was deemed the author of diseases; to deliver over to him the cankered member was to deliver over the latter to the natural executioner of the sentence. A premature death was usually regarded as the result of one of those occult judgments which, to use the forcible Hebrew phrase, "cut off a soul from Israel." The Apostles believed themselves invested with supernatural rights. In pronouncing such condemnations, they thought that their anathemas could not fail to take effect.

The terrible impression which the excommunications made, and the hatred of all the brethren against members thus cut off, might, indeed, cause death in many cases, or at least compel the culprit to expatriate himself. The same terrible ambiguity was to be found in the ancient Law. "Cutting off" implied at once death, expulsion from the community, exile, and a solitary and mysterious decease. To slay the apostate and blasphemer, to smite the body to save the soul, must have seemed quite legitimate. We must bear in mind that we are in the time of the zealots, who considered it a virtuous act to stab anyone who fell short of the law, and not forget that certain Christians were or had been zealots. Stories like that of the death of Ananias and Sapphira excited no compunction. The idea of civil authority was so alien to all this little world standing outside the Roman law, the persuasion was so strong that

[1] 1 Cor. v. 5.

the Church was a complete society sufficing to itself, that no one perceived in a miracle entailing death or bodily mutilation an outrage punishable before the common law. Enthusiasm and a fervent faith covered and excused all. But the frightful danger which these theocratic maxims concealed for the future is clear. The Church was armed with a sword; excommunication was to be a decree of death. Thenceforth there was in the world a power outside the State, which disposed of the lives of its citizens. Assuredly, had the Roman authority confined itself to repressing among Jews and Christians principles so reprehensible, it would have been a thousand times right. But in its brutality it confounded the most legitimate of liberties, that of worshipping as one will, with abuses which no society has ever been able to tolerate with impunity.

Peter had a certain primacy among the Apostles, due especially to his zeal and energy. In these first years he is scarce separable from John, son of Zebedee. They nearly always walked together, and their concord was undoubtedly the corner-stone of the new faith. James, brother of the Lord, almost equalled them in authority, at least in a portion of the Church. As to certain intimate friends of Jesus, like the Galilean women and the Bethany family, we have already remarked that they are no longer to be taken into account. Less concerned to organise and found, the faithful comrades of Jesus were content to love dead him whom they had loved alive. Plunged in their expectation, the noble women who made the faith of the world were almost unknown to the important men of Jerusalem. When they died, the leading features of the history of infant Christianity were laid in the tomb with them. Energetic rôles alone bring renown; those who are content to love in secret remain obscure, but surely theirs is the better part.

Needless to say, this little group of simple folk had no speculative theology. Jesus had wisely held aloof from all metaphysics. He had but one dogma, his own divine sonship and the divinity of his mission. The whole creed of the primitive Church could be put in a single line: "Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God." This belief rested on a decisive argument, the fact of the resurrection, of which the disciples bore themselves as witnesses. In reality, none (not even the Galilean women) said they had seen the resurrection. But the absence of the body, and the apparitions which had followed, seemed equivalent to the actual episode. To attest the resurrection of Jesus, such was the task which all held in view as being specially imposed on them. It was, moreover, soon imagined that the master had predicted this event. Various sayings of his were recalled, which they supposed had been imperfectly understood at the time, and in which, after the event, they saw an announcement of the resurrection. Belief in the impending glorious manifestation of Jesus was universal. The secret pass-word which the brethren used among themselves to recognise and fortify each other was *Maran atha*, "the Lord cometh!" They believed they recalled a declaration of Jesus to the effect that their preaching would not have time to go through all the cities of Israel before the Son of man appeared in his majesty. In the meanwhile, Jesus, having risen again, was seated at the right hand of his Father. There he would rest until the solemn day when he should come, seated on the clouds, to judge the quick and the dead.

Their idea of Jesus was that which he had himself given them. Jesus was a prophet, potent in words and in deeds, a man chosen of God, who had received a special mission to mankind, a mission which he proved by his miracles and, above all, by his resurrection. God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and invested him with strength; he passed his life in doing good and in healing

those who were in the power of the Devil; for God was with him. He is the Son of God—that is, a man absolutely God's, a representative of God on earth; he is the Messiah, the saviour of Israel, foretold by the prophets. The reading of the books of the Old Testament, especially the prophets and the Psalms, was habitual in the sect. In this reading a fixed principle was observed, that of everywhere finding the type of Jesus. They were convinced that the ancient Hebrew books were full of him, and, from the earliest years, a collection of texts drawn from the prophets, the Psalms, and certain apocryphal books was formed, wherein they were persuaded that the life of Jesus was predicted and described in advance. This method of arbitrary interpretation was that of all the Jewish schools then. Messianic allusions were a sort of literary pastime, similar to the use which the ancient preachers made of passages in the Bible, distorted from their natural sense and taken as simple ornaments of sacred rhetoric.

Jesus, with his exquisite tact in religious things, had instituted no fresh ritual. As yet the new sect had no special ceremonies. Their pious practices were the Jewish practices. The assemblies were in no way liturgical in the precise sense of the word; they were meetings of brotherhoods, where they gave themselves up to prayer, exercises in glossolalia, prophecy, and the reading of correspondence. There was nothing sacerdotal yet. There was no priest (*cohen* or ἱερεύς); the *presbyteros* was the "elder" of the community, nothing more. The sole priest was Jesus; in another sense all the faithful were priests. Fasting was deemed a very meritorious practice. Baptism was the sign of entrance into the sect. The rite was the same as for that of John, but it was administered in the name of Jesus. Baptism was, however, regarded as an insufficient initiation. It had to be followed by the administration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which was effected by a prayer spoken by the Apostles on the head of the neophyte, with laying on of hands.

This laying on of hands, already so familiar to Jesus, was the essential sacramental act. It conferred inspiration, inward illumination, the power of doing marvels, of prophesying, of speaking tongues. This was what was called the baptism of the Spirit. It was believed that Jesus had once said: "John, indeed, baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost."[1] Little by little all these ideas were transfused together, and the baptism was conferred "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But it is improbable that, in the early days we are at now, this formula was yet employed. The simplicity of this primitive Christian worship is obvious. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles had invented it. Before them certain Jewish sects had adopted these grave and solemn rites, which in part appear to come from Chaldæa, where they are still practised with special liturgies by the Sabians or Mendaïtes. The religion of Persia also comprised many rites of the same order.

The popular medical beliefs, which had formed part of the power of Jesus, continued in his disciples. The faculty of healing was one of the miraculous gifts conferred by the Spirit. The first Christians, like nearly all the Jews of the time, saw in disease the chastisement of a sin or the work of a malevolent demon. Like Jesus, the Apostles passed for being potent exorcists. It was imagined that their anointings with oil, combined with imposition of the hands and invocation of the name of Jesus, were all-powerful to wash away the sins that caused the disease and to heal the sick man. Oil has ever been the remedy *par excellence* in the East. Moreover, the mere imposition of the Apostles' hands was reputed to have the same effects. This imposition was made by direct touch. It is not impossible that,

[1] *Acts* xi. 16.

in some cases, the warmth of the hands, passing to the head, procured the sick man a little relief.

The sect being young and small in number, the question of deaths did not arise till later. The effect of the first few which took place in the ranks of the brethren was strange. They were disquieted as to the fate of the deceased; they asked if they were less favoured than those who were preserved to see with their own eyes the advent of the Son of man. There was a general tendency to consider the interval between death and resurrection as a sort of blank in the consciousness of the defunct. The idea developed in the *Phædo* that the soul exists before and after death, that death is a good, that it is even the essentially philosophical state, since the soul is then wholly free and untrammelled—this idea, I say, was in no way a settled one among the first Christians. Most often it would seem that man for them did not exist without a body. This conception long persisted, and only gave way when the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in the sense of Greek philosophy, had made its entrance into the Church, and had combined, for good or ill, with the Christian dogma of resurrection and the universal making new. At the hour we have reached, belief in the resurrection reigned almost alone. The funeral rite was no doubt the Jewish rite. No importance was attached to it; no inscription indicated the name of the dead man. The great resurrection was near at hand; the body of the believer had but a short stay to make in the rock. There was not much anxiety to come to an agreement on the question whether the resurrection would be universal—that is to say, would embrace both the good and the wicked, or whether it would apply to the elect alone.

One of the most remarkable phenomena of the new religion was the revival of prophetism. For long, prophets had scarce been heard of in Israel. This particular order of inspiration seemed born anew in the little sect. The primitive Church had several prophets and prophetesses, similar to those of the Old Testament. The psalmists reappeared also. We no doubt have the type of the Christian psalms in the canticles which Luke delights in sowing in his Gospel, and which are modelled on the canticles of the Old Testament. These psalms and prophecies are devoid of originality in form; but they are inspired and transfused with an admirable spirit of sweetness and piety. They are like a weakened echo of the last productions of the sacred lyre of Israel. The Book of Psalms was in a sense the calix of the flower, in which the Christian bee pillaged its first honey. The Pentateuch, on the contrary, was apparently little read and meditated; for it were substituted allegories in the style of the Jewish *midrashim*, in which all the historic significance of the books was suppressed.

The music which accompanied the new hymns was probably that species of sobbing without distinct notes which is still the church music of the Greeks, of the Maronites, and in general of the Christians of the East. It is less a musical modulation than a way of forcing the voice and emitting through the nose a kind of droning, in which all the changes of tone or pitch follow each other closely. This grotesque music is performed standing erect, with fixed gaze, furrowed forehead, knitted brows, and an air of effort. The word *amen*, in particular, is uttered with trembling in a quavering voice. This word played a great part in the liturgy. In imitation of the Jews, the new believers used it to mark the adhesion of the crowd to the word of prophet or preacher. It was possibly already ascribed secret virtues and pronounced with a certain emphasis. We do not know if this primitive ecclesiastical singing had an instrumental accompaniment. As to inward song, that which the faithful "sang in their hearts," and which was only the overflowing of those tender

souls, ardent and dreamy, it was, no doubt, executed like the *cantilenæ* of the mediæval Lollards, half under the breath. In general, it was joy that was poured forth in these hymns. One of the maxims of the sages of the sect was: "Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise."[1]

Solely destined for the edification of the assembled brethren, this first Christian literature was not written. To write books was an idea that occurred to no one. Jesus had spoken; his words were remembered. Had he not promised that this generation of his hearers should not pass away before he came again?

Chapter VI.

CONVERSION OF THE HELLENIST AND PROSELYTE JEWS

Till now the Church of Jerusalem has presented itself to us as a little Galilean colony. The friends whom Jesus made in Jerusalem or its vicinity, such as Martha, Mary of Bethany, Joseph of Arimathæa, and Nicodemus, have vanished from the scene. The Galilean group, rallied around the Twelve, alone remain active and compact. The preaching of these zealous disciples is unending. Later, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and far from Judæa, the sermons of the Apostles were represented as public displays, taking place in the streets in the presence of assembled multitudes. Such a conception is apparently to be relegated to the number of those conventional imaginations in which legend is so prolific. The authorities who had put Jesus to death would not have allowed such scandals to be revived. The proselytism of the faithful was especially carried on in absorbing conversations, in which the warmth of their souls infected one after another. Their preaching under Solomon's portico must have been addressed to very limited audiences. But the effect was only the deeper. Their discourses especially consisted in citations from the Old Testament, by which they believed they proved that Jesus was the Messiah. The reasoning was subtle and weak, but all the Jewish exegesis of the time is of the same nature; the conclusions drawn by the doctors of the Mishna from the texts of the Bible are no more satisfying.

Weaker still was the proof invoked in support of their arguments and derived from alleged marvels. It is impossible to doubt that the Apostles believed they did miracles. Miracles passed for being the sign of all divine missions. St. Paul, with much the ripest mind of the first Christian century, believed that he performed them. It was held as certain that Jesus had done them. It was natural that the series of these divine manifestations should continue. In fact, thaumaturgy was a privilege of the Apostles until the end of the first century. The Apostles' miracles were of the same nature as those of Jesus, and consisted especially, but not exclusively, in healing diseases and exorcising possessed persons. It was alleged that their shadow alone sufficed to perform wonderful cures. These prodigies were held to be the regular gifts of the Holy Spirit, and were estimated in the same

[1] James v. 13.

rank as the gifts of knowledge, of preaching, and of prophecy. In the third century the Church still believed that it possessed the same privileges, and exercised as a sort of permanent right the power of healing the sick, of expelling demons, of predicting the future. Ignorance rendered all possible in this respect. Do we not see, even in our own days, honest folk, lacking, however, the scientific spirit, deceived in a lasting fashion by the chimeras of animal magnetism and other illusions?

It is not by these naïve errors, nor by the paltry discourses which we read in the *Acts*, that we ought to judge the means for conversion at the disposal of the founders of Christianity. The true preaching consisted in the familiar talks of these good and sincerely convinced men; it was the reflection, still perceptible in their discourse, of the words of Jesus; it was, above all, their piety, their sweetness. The attraction of the common life which they led also had much force. Their house was like a hospice where all the poor, all the helpless, found shelter and help.

One of the first to affiliate himself to the nascent sect was a Cypriot called Joseph Hallevi, or the Levite. He sold his field like the others, and laid the proceeds at the feet of the Twelve. He was an intelligent man, of proved devotion, and of ready speech. The Apostles were closely attached to him, and called him *Bar-naba*—that is to say, "the son of prophecy" or "of preaching." He was included, indeed, among the number of the prophets—that is, of the inspired preachers. We shall find him later playing a leading part. After Paul, he was the most energetic missionary of the first century. A certain Mnason, his compatriot, was converted about the same time. Cyprus had many Jewish colonies. Barnabas and Mnason were no doubt of Jewish race. The close and prolonged relations of Barnabas with the Church of Jerusalem incline the belief that Syro-Chaldaic was familiar to him.

A conquest almost as important as that of Barnabas was that of a certain John, who bore the Roman surname of *Marcus*. He was a cousin of Barnabas, and circumcised. His mother, Mary, must have been in easy circumstances; she was converted like her son, and her home was more than once the meeting-place of the Apostles. These two conversions seem to have been the work of Peter. In any case, Peter was on very intimate terms with mother and son; he considered himself at home in their house. Even admitting the hypothesis that John Mark is not to be identified with the real or supposed author of the second Gospel, his rôle would still be considerable. Later, we shall see him accompanying in their apostolic journeys Paul, Barnabas, and probably Peter himself.

The first fire thus burnt up with great rapidity. The most renowned men of the apostolic century were nearly all won over in two or three years by a kind of simultaneous impulse. It was a second Christian generation, corresponding to that which had formed five or six years previously on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias. This second generation had not seen Jesus, and could not equal the first in authority. But it was to surpass it by its activity and by its taste for distant missions. One of the best known among the new adepts was Stephanus, or Stephen, who seems to have been only a simple proselyte before his conversion. He was a man of fire and passion. His faith was of the keenest, and he was held to be favoured with all the gifts of the Spirit. Philip, who, like Stephen, was a deacon and a zealous evangelist, joined the community about the same time. He was often confounded with his namesake, the Apostle. Finally, at this epoch, were converted Andronicus and Junia, probably a man and wife, who afforded, like Aquila and Priscilla later, the pattern of an apostolic couple, devoted to all the cares of mission work. They were of the blood of Israel, and on very intimate terms with the Apostles.

The new converts were all Jews by

religion when grace touched them; but they belonged to two very different classes of Jews. Some were "Hebrews"—that is to say, Jews of Palestine, speaking Hebrew, or rather Aramaic, reading the Bible in the Hebrew text; the others were "Hellenists"—that is to say, Greek-speaking Jews, reading the Bible in Greek. These latter again were subdivided into two classes, some being of Jewish blood, others being proselytes—that is, people of non-Israelite origin, affiliated to Judaism in various degrees. These Hellenists, who nearly all came from Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, or Cyrene, dwelt in distinct quarters of Jerusalem. They had their separate synagogues, and thus formed little communities apart. Jerusalem counted a great number of these special synagogues. It was in them that the word of Jesus found the soil ready to receive it and make it fertile.

The whole primitive nucleus of the Church had been exclusively composed of "Hebrews"; the Aramaic dialect, which was the tongue of Jesus, had been the only one they had known and used. But it is clear that, from the second or third year after the death of Jesus, Greek was invading the little community and was soon to predominate. By reason of their daily intercourse with these new brethren, Peter, John, James, Jude, and the Galilean disciples generally, learnt Greek, so much the more easily as they already perhaps knew something of it. An incident, soon to be referred to, shows that this diversity of languages at first caused some division in the community, and that the two sections were not on very good terms. After the ruin of Jerusalem we shall find the "Hebrews," in retirement beyond the Jordan at the altitude of the Lake of Tiberias, forming a separate Church with destinies apart. But in the interval between these two phases it does not appear that diversity of tongues was of consequence in the Church. Orientals have great facility in learning languages; in the towns each habitually speaks two or three. It is probable, then, that those of the Galilean Apostles who took an active part acquired the practice of Greek, and even used it in preference to Syro-Chaldaic, when the faithful speaking Greek were much the more numerous. The Palestinian dialect had to be given up on the day when a propaganda of far-reaching extent was imagined. A provincial dialect, scarcely ever put in writing, and not spoken out of Syria, was as little fitted as possible for such an object. Greek, on the other hand, was in some measure imposed on Christianity. It was the universal language of the time, at least for the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. In particular, it was the tongue of the Jews scattered through the Roman Empire. Then, as now, the Jews adopted with great readiness the languages of the countries in which they dwelt. They did not pride themselves on purity, and this is why the Greek of primitive Christianity is so bad. Even the best educated Jews pronounced the classical language wrongly. Their expressions were always modelled on the Syriac; they never shook off the burden of the uncouth dialects which the Macedonian conquest had brought them.

Conversions to Christianity soon became much more numerous among the "Hellenists" than among the "Hebrews." The old Jews of Jerusalem were little attracted to a sect of provincial people, indifferently versed in the only science which a Pharisee appreciated, the science of the Law. The position of the little Church in relation to Judaism was, like that of Jesus himself, somewhat ambiguous. But every religious or political party bears within it a controlling force, which forces it to revolve in its orbit despite itself. The first Christians, whatever their apparent respect for Judaism, were in reality only Jews by birth or external habits. The true spirit of the sect had another source. What was germinating in official Judaism was the Talmud; but Christianity had no affinity with the Talmudic school.

That is why Christianity found favour, above all, in the least Jewish portions of Judaism. The rigidly orthodox affected it but little; it was the new-comers, people scarce catechised, who had not been at the great schools, free from routine and uninitiated in the holy tongue, who gave ear to the Apostles and their disciples. Looked down upon by the aristocrats of Jerusalem, these upstarts of Judaism thus took a sort of revenge. It is always the young and newly-acquired members of a community who have least heed for tradition and are most inclined for novelties.

In these classes, little subject to the doctors of the Law, credulity was also, it seems, more simple and whole-hearted. What strikes us in the Talmudic Jew is not credulity. The gullible Jew and friend of the marvellous, whom the Latin satirists knew, was not the Jerusalem Jew; he was the Hellenist Jew, at once very religious and ill-educated, and consequently very superstitious. Neither the half-sceptical Sadducee nor the rigorous Pharisee could be much impressed by the theurgy so much in vogue in the apostolic circle. But the *Judæus Apella*, at whom the Epicurean Horace smiled, was there to believe. Social questions, moreover, had a special interest for those who did not benefit from the wealth which the Temple and the central institutions of the nation caused to flow into Jerusalem. And it was by combining with requirements very analogous to what is now called "socialism," that the new sect laid the solid foundation on which was to rest the edifice of its future.

Chapter VII.

THE CHURCH CONSIDERED AS AN ASSOCIATION OF THE POOR—INSTITUTION OF THE DIACONATE—THE DEACONESSES AND WIDOWS

One general truth is revealed to us by the comparative history of religions; all those which have had a beginning, and which are not contemporary with the origin of language itself, have been founded from social reasons much more than from theological reasons. This was surely the case with Buddhism. What made the marvellous fortune of that religion was not the nihilist philosophy which formed its basis; it was its social element. It was by proclaiming the abolition of castes, by establishing, to use his own expression, "a law of grace for all," that Sakya-Muni and his disciples drew after them first India, then the greater part of Asia. Like Christianity, Buddhism was a movement of the poor. The great attraction which made people throw themselves into it, was the facility offered the disinherited classes to rehabilitate themselves by the profession of a religion, which raised them up and offered them the boundless resources of succour and pity.

The number of poor in the first century of our era was very considerable in Judæa. The country is by its natural conditions devoid of the resources which procure a comfortable living. In such non-industrial countries nearly all fortunes owe their origin either to richly-endowed

religious institutions or the favours of a Government. The wealth of the Temple had for long been the exclusive perquisite of a small number of nobles. The Asmoneans had formed about their dynasty a group of rich families; the Herods greatly augmented luxury and comfort in a certain class of society. But the true theocratic Jew, turning his back upon Roman civilisation, only became the poorer thereby. There grew up an entire class of holy men, pious, fanatical, rigid observants of the law, in external appearance utterly wretched. It was in this class that the sects and fanatical factions, so numerous at this epoch, found recruits. The universal dream was the reign of the plebeian Jew who had remained faithful, and the humiliation of the rich, who was considered a turncoat, a traitor who had deserted to profane life, to outward civilisation. Never did hate match that of God's poor against the splendid buildings which began to cover the country, and against the works of the Romans. Forced, lest they should die of hunger, to work on these edifices which seemed to them monuments of pride and forbidden luxury, they believed themselves victims of rich men, wicked, corrupt, unfaithful to the law.

One can appreciate how an association of mutual succour was hailed with delight in such a social state. The little Christian Church must have seemed a paradise. That family of brethren, simple and united, drew adherents from every side. In return for what they brought, they obtained an assured future, a very sweet comradeship, and precious hopes. The general custom was to turn one's fortune into coin before entering the sect. This fortune usually consisted of little rural properties, producing little and hard to work. There was only advantage, more especially for unmarried people, in exchanging these parcels of ground for an investment in an assurance society, with the kingdom of God in view. Even some married persons fell in with this arrangement; precautions were taken that the associates should really deposit all they had, and retain nothing out of the common fund. In fact, as each received, not in proportion to what he had put in, but in proportion to his needs, all reservation of property was, indeed, a theft from the community. The surprising resemblance of such attempts at organising the proletariat to certain Utopias, which have come into being at a time little remote from us, is clear. But there was a profound difference in the fact that Christian communism had a religious basis, while modern socialism has none. It is obvious that an association in which the dividend is according to the needs of each, and not according to the capital deposited, can only rest on a feeling of very lofty self-denial and on an ardent faith in a religious ideal.

In such a social constitution administrative difficulties must have been very numerous, whatever the degree of brotherhood which reigned. Between the two sections of the community, which did not speak the same language, misunderstandings were inevitable. It was hard for the pure-blooded Jews not to feel a little disdain for their less noble co-religionists. Indeed, murmurs were not slow in making themselves heard. The "Hellenists," who, every day, grew more numerous, complained that their widows were less well treated in the distributions than those of the "Hebrews." Up till then the Apostles had supervised the expenditure. But, confronted with such complaints, they felt the necessity of delegating this part of their powers; and they proposed that the community should entrust the administrative duties to seven wise and considerate men. The proposal was accepted, and the election took place. The seven chosen were Stephanus or Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas. This last was of Antioch, and was a simple proselyte. Stephen was perhaps of the same condition. It seems that, reversing the procedure in the election of the Apostle Matthias, there had been a

self-imposed resolve to choose the seven administrators, not from the group of primitive disciples, but from among the new converts, and especially the Hellenists. All, in fact, bore purely Greek names. Stephen was the most considerable of the seven, and in a sense their chief. They were presented to the Apostles, who, in accord with a rite already consecrated, prayed over their heads and laid their hands upon them.

To the administrators thus selected was given the Syriac name of *Shammashin*, in Greek Διάχονοι. Sometimes, also, they were called "the Seven," to distinguish them from the "Twelve." Such, then, was the origin of the diaconate, which proves to be the most ancient ecclesiastical function, the oldest of the sacred orders. All the Churches organised later had deacons, in imitation of that of Jerusalem. The fertility of such an institution was marvellous. It was care for the poor raised to the level of a religious function. It was a proclamation of the truth that social questions are the first which claim our attention. It was the foundation of political economy as much as a religious matter. The deacons were the best preachers of Christianity. We are soon to see the part they played as evangelists. As organisers, as economists, as administrators, they had a more important rôle still. These practical men, in constant touch with the poor, the sick, the women, went everywhere, saw everything, exhorted and converted in the most efficacious manner. They did far more than the Apostles, inactive on their seat of honour at Jerusalem. They were the creators of Christianity in all its most solid and durable elements.

At an early date women were admitted to this office. They bore as now the name of "sisters." They were at first widows; later, virgins were preferred for this office. The tact which guided the primitive Church in all this was admirable. These good and simple men laid with profound skill, because it came from the heart, the foundations of the great Christian quality *par excellence*, charity. There was nothing to have given them the model of such institutions. A vast ministry of well-doing and of mutual succour, to which both sexes brought their varying qualities and concerted their efforts for the relief of human miseries; such was the holy creation which resulted from the labour of these first two or three years. They were the most fertile in the history of Christianity. One feels that the still living thought of Jesus filled his disciples, and directed them in all their actions with marvellous lucidity. To be just, indeed, it is to Jesus that the honour of what great things the Apostles did must be ascribed. It is probable that in his lifetime he had laid the foundations of the institutions, which developed with full success immediately after his death.

Women naturally flocked to a community in which the weak were protected with so many guarantees. Their position in the society of that day was humble and precarious; the widow, especially, despite some tutelary laws, was most usually abandoned to misery and little respected. Many doctors urged that woman should receive no religious training. The Talmud puts in the same rank among the plagues of the world the talkative and curious widow who spends her life in gossipping with her neighbours and the virgin who wastes her time in prayers. The new religion created for these poor outcasts a sure and honourable refuge. Some women held a very high rank in the Church, and their house served as a meeting-place. As for those who had no house of their own, they were formed into a kind of order or body of female presbyters, which probably also comprised virgins, and played a leading part in the organisation of almsgiving. The institutions regarded as the late matured fruit of Christianity, the congregations of women, the nuns, the sisters of charity, were one of its first creations, the principle of its strength, the most perfect expression of its spirit. In particular,

the admirable idea of consecrating by a kind of religious character, and subjecting to a regular discipline, women who are not in the bonds of marriage, is entirely Christian. The word "widow" became synonymous with devotee, dedicated to God, and consequently with "deaconess." In those lands where the wife of twenty-four is already withered, where there is no interval between the child and the old woman, it was like the creation of a new life for that half of the human species more capable of devotion. The age of the Seleucidæ had been a terrible epoch of feminine debaucheries. Never were known so many domestic dramas, such series of poisonings and adulteries. The sages of that day had need to regard woman as a scourge for humanity, as an element of degradation and shame, as an evil genius having as her sole function that of warring with what of nobleness springs in the other sex. Christianity changed things. At that age which in our eyes is still youth, but in which the life of the Eastern woman is so gloomy, so fatally given over to suggestions of evil, the widow, by putting about her head a black shawl, could become a respected person, worthily occupied; a deaconess, the equal of the most estimable men. The difficult position of the childless widow Christianity elevated and consecrated. The widow almost became the equal of the virgin. She was the *calogrie*, or "beautiful old woman," venerated, useful, treated as a mother. These women, constantly coming and going, were admirable missionaries for the new sect. The Protestants are self-deceived in importing into the appreciation of these facts our modern spirit of individualism. In Christian history it is socialism and monasticism which are primitive.

The bishop, the priest, as time has formed them, did not yet exist. But the pastoral ministry, that intimate intercourse of souls outside the ties of blood, was already established. That had always been the special gift of Jesus, and was, as it were, a legacy from him. Jesus had often repeated that he was for each one more than his father, more than his mother; that to follow him it was needful to leave those most dear. Christianity placed something above the family; it created spiritual brotherhood and marriage. The ancient marriage, giving over the wife to the husband without restriction, without any compensating clause, was a veritable slavery. The moral freedom of woman began on the day when the Church gave her a confidant, a guide in Jesus, to direct and console her, always to give her ear, and sometimes to hearten her to resist. Woman needs to be ruled, is only happy when ruled; but she must needs love him who rules. That is what neither the ancient societies, nor Judaism, nor Mohammedanism were able to effect. Up till now woman has never had a religious consciousness, a moral individuality, an opinion of her own, save in Christianity. Thanks to the bishops and the monastic life, a Radegund was to be capable of finding means of escape from the arms of a barbarian husband. The life of the soul being all that counts, it is just and reasonable that the pastor who knows how to make the divine cords vibrate, the secret counsellor who holds the key to conscience, should be more than the father, more than the spouse.

In a sense, Christianity was a reaction against the too narrow organisation of the family in the Aryan race. Not only did the old Aryan societies almost shut out any save the married man, but they understood marriage in its strictest sense. It was something similar to the English family, a narrow circle, closed in and stifling, a collective egoism, as blighting to the soul as the egoism of an individual. Christianity, with its divine conception of the freedom of the kingdom of God, corrected these exaggerations. And first of all it refrained from laying upon every one the duties of the generality. It saw that the family is not the absolute scheme of life, or, at least, a scheme adapted for all; that the duty of reproducing the human species is not a burden

on all, that there must be persons freed from such duties—sacred, no doubt, but not incumbent on all. The exception which Greek society made in favour of the *hetæræ* of the type of Aspasia, which Italian society made for the *cortigiana* of the type of Imperia, owing to the necessities of polite society, Christianity makes for the priest, the nun, the deaconess, in view of the general welfare. It admits diverse conditions in society. There are souls who find it sweeter to bestow their love on five hundred rather than on five or six, for whom the family under ordinary conditions can seem insufficient, cold, and tiresome. Why extend on all the exigencies of our tame and commonplace societies? The temporal family does not satisfy man. He must needs have brothers and sisters who are not of his flesh.

By its hierarchy of diverse social functions, the primitive Church, for the moment, appeared to conciliate these contrary exigencies. We shall never appreciate how great was the happiness under these holy rules, which supported liberty without binding it, making possible at once the charms of the common life and those of family life. It was the opposite extreme from the turmoil of our societies, with their artificiality and lack of affection, in which the sensitive soul is sometimes so cruelly isolated. The atmosphere was warm and peaceful in those little retreats that were called Churches. Men dwelt together in the same faith and with the same hope. But it is also clear that such conditions would be inapplicable in a great society. When whole countries embraced Christianity, the rule of the first Churches became a Utopia, and took refuge in the monasteries. In one sense, the monastic life is but the continuation of the primitive Churches. The convent is the necessary consequence of the Christian spirit; there is no perfect Christianity without the convent, since only there can the Gospel ideal be realised.

Much credit, assuredly, must be allowed to Judaism in these great creations. Each of the Jewish communities, scattered over the shores of the Mediterranean, was already a kind of Church, with its fund for mutual succour. Almsgiving, always advocated by the sages, had become a precept; it was practised in the Temple and at the synagogues; it was reputed the first duty of the proselyte. In all ages Judaism has distinguished itself by care for its poor, and by the feeling of brotherly charity which it inspires.

There is supreme injustice in opposing Christianity to Judaism as a reproach, since all that is primitive in Christianity came, on the whole, from Judaism. It is when we think of the Roman world that we are struck by the miracles of charity and free association performed by the Church. Never had profane society, recognising only reason as its basis, produced such admirable effects. The law of all profane, philosophic societies, if I may dare to say so, is liberty, sometimes equality, never fraternity. Charity, from the point of view of law, is in no way obligatory; it only concerns individuals; it even presents certain drawbacks and is distrusted. Every attempt to apply the public funds to the welfare of the masses seems communism. When a man dies of starvation, when whole classes languish in misery, the politician limits himself to saying that it is annoying. He demonstrates very ably that civil and political order can only exist with liberty; now, the consequence of liberty is that he who has nothing, and can make nothing, must die of hunger. That is logical; but nothing withstands the abuse of logic. The needs of the most numerous class always end by winning the day. Purely political and civil institutions do not suffice; social and religious aspirations have a right to legitimate satisfaction also.

It is the glory of the Jewish people to have splendidly asserted this principle, from which resulted the ruin of the ancient States, and which will never

again be rooted out. The Jewish Law is social, and not political; the prophets and authors of apocalypses were promoters of social revolutions, not political revolutions. In the first half of the first century the Jews, brought into the presence of profane civilisation, had but one idea, to refuse the benefits of the Roman law, that philosophic, atheistic law, equal to all; and to proclaim the excellence of their own theocratic Law, which formed a religious and moral society. The Law brings blessing; such was the view of all the Jewish thinkers like Philo and Josephus. The laws of other peoples are vigilant that justice have its course, and take little heed whether men be good and happy. The Jewish Law goes down to the last details of moral training. Christianity is only the development of the same idea. Each Church is a monastery, where all have rights over all, where there must be neither poor nor wicked, where all, consequently, must watch over and command one another. Primitive Christianity can be defined as a great association of poor men, a heroic effort against egoism, founded on the idea that each has a right only to what he needs, that what is over belongs to those who have not. One can easily see that between such a spirit and the Roman spirit there was bound to be a struggle to the death, and that Christianity, for its part, could only attain dominion over the world on the condition of profoundly modifying its natural tendencies and original programme.

But the needs which it represents will last eternally. The common life, from the second half of the Middle Ages onwards, having served the abuses of an intolerant Church, the monastery having too often grown to be a feudal fief or the barrack of a dangerous and fanatical soldiery, the modern spirit has displayed much severity towards monasticism. We have forgotten that it is in life lived in a community that the soul of man has tasted most joy. The canticle, "Behold, now good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"[1] has ceased to be ours. But when modern individualism shall have borne its last fruits; when humanity, stunted, dejected, stricken with impotence, shall return to great institutions and strong disciplines; when our petty bourgeois society, or, to put it better, our world of pigmies, shall have been hounded forth under the lash of the heroic and idealistic portions of humanity, then the common life will resume its value. A host of great things, such as science, will be organised in a monastic form, on a hereditary principle other than that of blood. The importance attached to the family by the present age will diminish. Egoism, the essential law of civil society, will not suffice great souls. All, flocking from the opposite points of the compass, will band themselves together against vulgarity. The true meaning of the words of Jesus and of mediæval ideas on poverty will be recovered. It will be understood how it was possible to hold the possession of a thing to be an inferiority, and how the founders of the mystic life disputed for centuries to determine whether Jesus possessed at least "the things consumed by use." These Franciscan subtleties will again become great social problems. The splendid ideal depicted by the author of the *Acts* will be inscribed as a prophetic revelation over the gate of humanity's paradise: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.....For neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.....And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking

[1] *Psalm* cxxxiii. 1.

bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."[1]

We must not, however, anticipate. We have reached the year 36, or about it. Tiberius at Capri scarce suspects the enemy for the Empire which is growing up. In two or three years the new sect has made amazing progress. It counts several thousand adherents. It is already easy to foresee that its conquests will be more especially effective among the Hellenists and proselytes. The Galilean group which has heard the master, while retaining its primacy, is, so to speak, submerged beneath a flood of new-comers speaking Greek. One already feels that the leading part will belong to these latter. At the hour we have reached no pagan—that is to say, no man without a former link with Judaism—has entered the Church. But the proselytes fill very important posts therein. The recruiting-field of the disciples is also much enlarged; the Church is no longer a simple little college of Palestinians; it comprises people from Cyprus, Antioch, and Cyrene, and in general from almost all the points on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean where Jewish colonies have been established. Egypt alone is wanting in this primitive Church, and will be wanting for long yet. The Jews of that country were almost in schism with Judæa. They lived their own life, higher in many respects than that of Palestine, and they received but a feeble reaction from the religious movements of Jerusalem.

Chapter VIII.

THE FIRST PERSECUTION—DEATH OF STEPHEN—DESTRUCTION OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF JERUSALEM

It was inevitable that the preaching of the new sect, even though carried on with much reserve, should re-awaken the resentments which had accumulated against the founder and had ended in causing his death. The Sadducean family of Hanan, which had had Jesus slain, still reigned. Joseph Kaïapha filled, until 36, the high priesthood, all the actual power of which he gave over to his father-in-law Hanan and his relatives John and Alexander. These proud and pitiless men were impatient at the sight of a band of good and holy people, with no official rank, gaining the favour of the multitude. Once or twice Peter, John, and the chief members of the apostolic college were put in prison and condemned to scourging. It was the punishment inflicted on heretics. The authorisation of the Romans was unnecessary for its application. As we may imagine, these brutalities did no more than kindle the ardour of the Apostles. They left the Sanhedrim, where they had just suffered the flagellation, filled with joy at having been deemed worthy to suffer outrage for him whom they loved. The eternal fatuity of penal repressions, applied to things of

[1] *Acts* iv. 32–35; ii. 46–47.

the soul! They, no doubt, passed for men of law and order, for models of prudence and wisdom, those reckless fools who, in the year 36, seriously believed they could master Christianity with a few blows of the whip.

These acts of violence were specially due to the Sadducees—that is to say, to the upper clergy—who surrounded the Temple and derived immense profits therefrom. Apparently the Pharisees did not display against the sect the animosity which they had shown to Jesus. The new believers were pious and rigorous folk, somewhat similar in their manner of life to the Pharisees themselves. The rage which the latter felt with the founder was due to the superiority of Jesus, a superiority which he took no pains to dissimulate. His subtle irony, his wit, his charm, his aversion from false devotees, had lighted ferocious hatreds. The Apostles, on the contrary, were devoid of wit; they never used irony. At moments the Pharisees were favourable to them; several Pharisees even became Christians. The terrible anathemas of Jesus against Pharisaism were not yet written down, and the tradition of the master's words was neither general nor uniform.

These first Christians were, moreover, such inoffensive persons that several members of the Jewish aristocracy, without precisely forming part of the sect, were well-disposed to them. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, who had known Jesus, no doubt remained on brotherly terms with the Church. The most renowned Jewish doctor of the age, Rabbi Gamaliel the Old, the grandson of Hillel, a man of broad and tolerant ideas, is said to have spoken in the Sanhedrim in favour of liberty for the Gospel preaching. The author of *Acts* ascribes to him an excellent argument, which ought to be the guiding rule of governments whenever they are confronted by novelties in the intellectual or moral sphere. "If this work be trivial," he said, "let it alone, it will fall of itself; if it be serious, how can you dare resist the work of God? In any case, you will not succeed in checking it." Little heed was paid to Gamaliel. Liberal minds amid opposed fanaticisms have no chance of thriving.

A terrible outburst was provoked by the deacon Stephen. His preaching was apparently very successful. The multitude flocked about him, and these assemblages culminated in very fierce brawls. It was, above all, the Hellenists, or proselytes, frequenters of the synagogue called the Libertines, people of Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Ephesus, who excited themselves in these disputations. Stephen passionately maintained that Jesus was the Messiah, that the priests had been guilty of a crime in putting him to death, that the Jews were rebels, sons of rebels, people who denied evidence. The authorities resolved on the ruin of the audacious preacher. Witnesses were posted to catch in his discourse some word against Moses. Naturally they found what they sought. Stephen was arrested and taken before the Sanhedrim. The phrase of which he was accused was nearly the same as that which had brought about the condemnation of Jesus. He was charged with saying that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the Temple, and transform the traditions attributed to Moses. It is quite possible, in fact, that Stephen may have used such language. A Christian of that epoch would have had no idea of speaking directly against the Law, since all observed it still; as to traditions, Stephen might well attack them, as Jesus had done himself; but these traditions were foolishly ascribed to Moses by the orthodox, and given a value equal to that of the written Law.

Stephen defended himself by stating the Christian argument with a great display of citations from the Law, the Psalms, and the prophets, and concluded by reproaching the members of the Sanhedrim with the slaying of Jesus. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," he said to them, "ye do

always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."[1] At these words a cry of rage interrupted him. Stephen, more and more exalted, fell into one of those fits of enthusiasm which were called the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His eyes were fixed on high; he beheld the glory of God, and Jesus at his Father's side, and he cried: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God!"[2] All present stopped their ears, and threw themselves upon him, grinding their teeth. He was dragged out of the city and stoned. The witnesses, who by the Law had to cast the first stones, took off their garments and laid them at the feet of a young fanatic called Saul or Paul, who dreamt with secret delight of the merits that he acquired by participating in the death of a blasphemer.

In all this the prescriptions of Deuteronomy, chapter xiii., were observed to the letter. But, regarded from the point of view of the civil law, this tumultuous execution, performed without the concurrence of the Romans, was an irregularity. In the case of Jesus, we have seen that the procurator's ratification was necessary. Perhaps this ratification was obtained for Stephen, and the execution did not follow the sentence so closely as the narrator of *Acts* would have it. It may be also that the Roman authority had been relaxed in Judæa. Pilate had just been suspended from his functions, or was on the point of being. The cause of this disgrace was precisely the too great severity he had shown in his administration. Jewish fanaticism had made life unbearable to him. Perhaps he was weary of refusing those frenzied beings the violences they demanded, and the haughty family of Hanan had succeeded in no longer requiring leave to pronounce death sentences. Lucius Vitellius (the father of him who was Emperor) was then imperial legate of Syria. He sought to win the good graces of the populations, and restored to the Jews the pontifical vestments which, since Herod the Great, had been kept in the tower of Antonia. Far from supporting Pilate in his acts of rigour, he decided in favour of the natives, and sent Pilate to Rome to reply to the accusations of those he had governed (beginning of the year 36). Their chief complaint was that the procurator did not lend enough complacence to their intolerant desires. Vitellius provisionally replaced him by his friend Marcellus, who was no doubt more careful not to displease the Jews, and, consequently, readier to consent to their religious murders. The death of Tiberius (March 16th, 37) only stimulated Vitellius in this policy. The first two years of the reign of Caligula were an epoch of general weakening for the Roman authority in Syria. The policy of this prince, before he lost his intellect, was to restore their self-government and native chiefs to the peoples of the East. It was thus that he founded the kingdoms or principalities of Antiochus, of Comagene, of Herod Agrippa, of Sohæmus, of Cotys, and of Polemon II., and permitted the enlargement of that of Haritha. When Pilate arrived in Rome, he found the new reign already begun. It is probable that Caligula decided against him, since he entrusted the government of Jerusalem to a new official, Marullus, who does not appear to have excited on the part of the Jews the violent recriminations which overwhelmed poor Pilate with difficulties and loaded him with worries.

What in any case is important to note is that, at the time we have reached, the persecutors of Christianity were not the Romans; they were the orthodox Jews. Amid all this fanaticism the Romans maintained principles of tolerance and

[1] *Acts* vii. 51–53. [2] *Ibid.* vii. 56.

reason. If the imperial authority is to be reproached with anything, it is with having been too weak, and with not having checked at the outset the civil consequences of a sanguinary law, ordaining the penalty of death for religious offences. But the Roman domination was not yet the absolute power it was later; it was a kind of protectorate or suzerainty. Condescension was pushed to the extreme of not putting the Emperor's head upon the coinage struck under the procurators lest Jewish ideas might be shocked. Rome sought not yet, in the East at least, to impose on the conquered peoples her laws, her gods, her customs; she left them to their local usages, outside the Roman law. Their half-independence was a sign the more of their inferiority. The imperial power in the East at this epoch somewhat resembled the Turkish authority, and the state of the native populations that of the *raïas*. The idea of equal rights and equal safeguards for all did not exist. Each provincial group had its own jurisdiction, as nowadays the various Christian and Jewish Churches in the Ottoman Empire have theirs. A few years ago in Turkey the patriarchs of the different communities of *raïas*, however little they were in concert with the Porte, were sovereigns over their subordinates, and could condemn them to the most cruel penalties.

The year of Stephen's death being anything between 36, 37, and 38, we are unaware if Kaïapha must bear its responsibility. Kaïapha was deposed by Lucius Vitellius in the year 36, a short time after Pilate; but the change was slight. He had as his successor his brother-in-law Jonathan, son of Hanan. He, in his turn, was succeeded by his brother Theophilus, son of Hanan, which continued the high priesthood in the house of Hanan till 42. Hanan was still alive, and, as the real possessor of power, sustained in his family the principles of pride, severity, and hatred of innovators which were in some measure hereditary therein.

The death of Stephen produced a great impression. The proselytes performed his funeral rites, accompanied by tears and wailings. The separation between the new sectaries and Judaism was not yet absolute. The proselytes and Hellenists, less severely orthodox than the pure Jews, believed it their duty to render public homage to a man who honoured their body, and whose special beliefs had not put him beyond the pale of the Law.

Thus was inaugurated the era of the Christian martyrs. Martyrdom was not an entirely new thing. Not to speak of John the Baptist and Jesus, Judaism, in the epoch of Antiochus Epiphanes, had had its witnesses, faithful even to death. But the series of courageous victims opened by St. Stephen has exercised a special influence upon the history of the human mind. It has introduced into the Western world an element which was lacking—exclusive and absolute faith, the idea that there is a single good and true religion. In this sense, the martyrs began the era of intolerance. It may be said with much plausibility that he who gives his life for his faith would be intolerant, were he master. Christianity, which had passed through three hundred years of persecution, was more persecuting than any religion had been, when it became dominant in its turn. When we have shed our blood for a cause, we are too inclined to shed the blood of others to preserve the treasure which we have won.

The murder of Stephen was not, moreover, an isolated episode. Profiting by the weakness of the Roman officials, the Jews burdened the Church with a real persecution. Apparently, the molestations were chiefly put upon the Hellenists and proselytes, whose free bearing exasperated the orthodox. The Church of Jerusalem, already so strongly organised, had to disperse. The Apostles, in accordance with a principle which seems to have been deeply rooted in their spirit, did not leave the city. It was probably thus with all the purely Jewish group,

those who were called "Hebrews." But the great community, with its common repasts, its diaconal duties, its varied exercises, ceased thenceforth, and was never revived on its first pattern. It had lasted for three or four years. For nascent Christianity it was an unparalleled stroke of luck that its first, and essentially communistic, attempts at association should have been so soon shattered. Efforts of this nature engender such crying abuses, that communistic bodies are condemned to early decay, or speedy denial of the principle which has created them. Thanks to the persecution of the year 37, the monastic Church of Jerusalem was freed from the ordeal of time. It fell in its flower, before inward perplexities had undermined it. It remained as a splendid dream, the memory of which heartened in their life of trials all those who had formed part of it, as an ideal to which Christianity would constantly aspire to return, without ever succeeding. Those who know what a priceless treasure is the memory of Ménilmontant for the still surviving members of the Saint-Simonian Church, what friendship it creates between them, what joy shines in their eyes when they speak of it, will understand what a powerful link the fact of having lived and then suffered together must have established between the new brothers. Great lives nearly always have as their guiding principle some months during which they have known God, and the perfume of which suffices to fill whole years with strength and sweetness.

The leading part in the persecution which we have just related belonged to the young Saul, whom we have already seen contributing, so far as in him lay, to the murder of Stephen. This furious bigot, armed with a permit from the priests, entered houses suspected of having Christians in them, violently seized on men and women, and dragged them to prison or the tribunal. Saul boasted that no man of his generation was as zealous for traditions as he. Often, it is true, the mildness and resignation of his victims amazed him; he felt something like remorse; he imagined he heard those pious women, looking for the kingdom of God, whom he had cast into prison, saying to him in the night with gentle voice: "Why persecutest thou us?" The blood of Stephen, which had almost spurted on him, sometimes troubled his sight. Many of the things which he had heard of Jesus went to his heart. That superhuman being, in his ethereal life, emerging thence at times to reveal himself in fleeting visions, haunted him as a spectre. But Saul repelled such thoughts with horror; he yielded himself with a sort of frenzy to faith in his traditions, and dreamed of new atrocities for those who assailed them. His name had become the terror of the faithful; more abominable violences were feared at his hands, more sanguinary treacheries.

Chapter IX.

FIRST MISSIONS—THE DEACON PHILIP

The persecution of 37 had the inevitable consequence of an extension of the doctrine, which it had been desired to check. Up till now Christian preaching had scarce gone beyond Jerusalem; no mission had been undertaken; shut up in its exalted, but narrow, communism, the mother Church had not radiated its faith around it, or formed branches. The dispersal of the little group cast

the good seed on the four winds of heaven. The members of the Church of Jerusalem, violently expelled from their quarter of the town, spread all over Judæa and Samaria, everywhere preaching the kingdom of God. The deacons, in particular, released from their administrative duties by the ruin of the community, became excellent evangelists. They were the young and active element in the sect, as opposed to the somewhat sluggish element formed by the Apostles and the "Hebrews." A single circumstance, that of language, would have sufficed to give the latter an inferiority, so far as preaching was concerned. They spoke, at least as their habitual tongue, a dialect which the Jews themselves a few leagues from Jerusalem did not use. It was to the Hellenists that fell the honour of the great conquest, the narration of which must now be our chief object.

The scene of the first of these missions, which were soon to embrace the whole Mediterranean basin, was the region adjacent to Jerusalem, in a circuit of two or three days' journey. The deacon Philip was the hero of this first holy expedition. He evangelised Samaria with great success. The Samaritans were schismatics; but the youthful sect, following the master's example, was less sensitive than the rigorous Jews on questions of orthodoxy. Jesus was said to have shown himself, on several occasions, somewhat favourable to the Samaritans.

Philip appears to have been one of the apostolic men most possessed with theurgy. The stories we have of him transport us into a strange and fantastic world. The conversions which he made among the Samaritans, and especially at Sebaste, their capital, were explained by miracles. The country itself was entirely given over to superstitious ideas about magic. In 36—that is to say, two or three years before the arrival of the Christian preachers—a fanatic had excited somewhat serious emotions among the Samaritans by preaching the necessity of a return to primitive Mosaism, the sacred utensils of which he claimed to have recovered. A certain Simon of the village of Gitta or Gitton, who later achieved a great notoriety, began from time to time to make himself known by his magic feats. It is painful to see the Gospel finding preparation and a support in such chimeras. A fairly large number were baptised in the name of Jesus. Philip had power to baptise, but not that of conferring the Holy Spirit. That privilege was reserved to the Apostles. When news reached Jerusalem of the formation of a group of the faithful at Sebaste, it was determined to send Peter and John to complete their initiation. The two Apostles came, laid their hands upon the new converts, and prayed over them; they were at once endowed with the marvellous powers attached to the administration of the Holy Spirit. Miracles, prophecy, and all the phenomena of illuminism were manifested, and in this respect the Church of Sebaste had nothing to envy the Church of Jerusalem.

If tradition is to be believed, Simon of Gitton had thenceforth intercourse with the Christians. Converted, according to report, by Philip's preaching and miracles, he caused himself to be baptised, and attached himself to that evangelist. Then, when the Apostles Peter and John had arrived, and he had witnessed the supernatural powers which the imposition of their hands procured, he came, it was said, to offer them money, that they might give him also the faculty of conferring the Holy Spirit. Peter was said to have made this admirable response: "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right before God."[1]

Whether really spoken or not, these words seem exactly to depict Simon's attitude to the nascent sect. We shall

[1] *Acts* viii. 20–21.

see, in fact, that, according to all indications, Simon of Gitton was the leader of a religious movement, parallel with Christianity, which can be regarded as a sort of Samaritan counterfeit of the work of Jesus. Had Simon already begun to dogmatise and work miracles when Philip arrived at Sebaste? Did he then enter into relations with the Christian Church? Has the anecdote which makes him the father of all "simony" any reality? Are we to admit that the world once saw, face to face, two thaumaturgists, one of whom was a charlatan and the other the "Stone" which has served as the foundation of the faith of humanity? Has a sorcerer had it in his power to hold the destinies of Christianity in the balance? Of this we must be ignorant, lacking authority; for the narrative of *Acts* is here of defective authenticity, and Simon became a subject of legends for the Christian Church from the first century. In history the general idea is alone pure. It would be unjust to stop at what is displeasing in this painful page of Christian origins. For vulgar audiences the miracle proves the doctrine; for us the doctrine makes us forget the miracle. When a belief has consoled and bettered humanity, it is excusable to have employed proofs proportionate to the weakness of the public addressed. But when error has been proved by error, what excuse is to be alleged? We do not mean this as a condemnation of Simon of Gitton. We shall have to explain ourselves later on his doctrine, and on his rôle, which was only displayed in the reign of Claudius. It need only be remarked here that an important principle seems to have been introduced, in connection with him, into Christian theurgy. Forced to admit that impostors did miracles as well, the orthodox theology attributed these miracles to the demon. To preserve some demonstrative value for prodigies, it was deemed necessary to imagine rules for distinguishing the true miracles from the false. For this, descent was made to a very puerile order of ideas.

Peter and John, after having confirmed the Church of Sebaste, set out for Jerusalem, which they regained, evangelising the villages of the country of the Samaritans. Philip, the deacon, continued his Gospel missions, turning off towards the south, to the ancient abode of the Philistines. This country, since the accession to power of the Maccabees, had been much encroached on by the Jews; Judaism was, however, far from being dominant therein. In the course of this journey Philip effected a conversion, which made some noise and was much discussed because of a particular circumstance. One day, as he was travelling along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is very lonely, he met a rich traveller, evidently a foreigner, for he was in a chariot, a mode of locomotion at all times practically unknown to the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine. He was returning from Jerusalem, and, gravely seated, was reading the Bible aloud, according to a common practice of the time. Philip, who in all things believed that he was moved by an inspiration from on high, felt himself attracted to this chariot. He walked by its side and affably entered into conversation with the wealthy stranger, offering to explain the passages which he did not understand. This was a fine opportunity for the evangelist to develop the Christian theory of the images of the Old Testament. He proved that all in the prophetic books related to Jesus; that Jesus was the solution of the great enigma; that it was of him, in particular, that the seer had spoken in the fine passage: "He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself and opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, he opened not his mouth."[1] The traveller believed him, and, at the first water they came to, said: "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised?"[2] The chariot was stopped;

[1] Isaiah liii. 7.
[2] *Acts* viii. 36.

Philip and the traveller went down to the water, and the latter was baptised.

Now, this traveller was an influential personage. He was a eunuch of the Candace of Ethiopia, her minister of finance and the keeper of her treasures, who had come up to worship at Jerusalem, and was now returning to Napata by the Egyptian route. *Candace*, or *Candaoce*, was the title of the female dynasty of Ethiopia about this time. Judaism had by then penetrated Nubia and Abyssinia; many natives had been converted, or, at least, counted among those proselytes who, without being circumcised, adored the one God. The eunuch was perhaps of this latter class, a simple, pious pagan, like the centurion Cornelius who is soon to figure in this history. In any case, it is out of the question to suppose that he was completely initiated into Judaism. No more is heard of the eunuch save this incident. But Philip told it, and later some importance was attached to it. When the question of the admission of pagans into the Christian Church became the problem of the day, a weighty precedent was found in the episode. Philip was reputed to have acted in it by divine inspiration. This baptism, conferred by command of the Holy Spirit on a man scarce a Jew, notoriously uncircumcised, who had only believed in Christianity for a few hours, was of high dogmatic value. It was an argument for those who considered that the doors of the new Church should be thrown open to all.

Philip, after this incident, went to Ashdod or Azotus. Such was the naïve condition of enthusiasm in which these missionaries lived that at every step they believed they heard voices from heaven and received instructions from the Spirit. Each step they took seemed to be guided by a higher force, and, in going from one town to another, they thought that they obeyed a supernatural inspiration. At times they imagined that they made aerial journeys. Philip was, in this respect, one of the most exalted. It was, he believed, on the warning of an angel that he had come from Samaria to the spot where he met the eunuch; after the latter's baptism he was convinced that the Spirit had caught him up and borne him in a single flight to Azotus.

Azotus and the Gaza road were the limits of the first Gospel mission towards the south. Beyond lay the desert and the nomad life, on which Christianity never had much hold. From Azotus the deacon Philip turned to the north, and evangelised the whole coast as far as Cæsarea. Possibly the Churches of Joppa and Lydda, which we shall soon find flourishing, were founded by him. He settled down at Cæsarea, and established an important Church. We shall meet him there again twenty years later. Cæsarea was a new city, and the largest in Judæa. It had been built on the site of a Sidonian fortress called "the tower of Abdastarte or Strato," by Herod the Great, who gave it, in honour of Augustus, the name which its ruins bear to this day. Cæsarea was much the best harbour of all Palestine, and it was gradually tending to become the capital. Wearied of residence at Jerusalem, the procurators of Judæa soon went thither, and made it their habitual abode. It was chiefly inhabited by pagans, but the Jews were fairly numerous; there were frequent cruel conflicts between the two classes of the population. Only Greek was spoken, and the Jews themselves had come to recite certain portions of the liturgy in Greek. The austere rabbis of Jerusalem regarded Cæsarea as a profane and perilous abode, where one almost became a pagan. For all the reasons just cited, that city will have much importance in our history as it continues. It was, in some measure, the port of Christianity—the point from which the Church of Jerusalem communicated with the whole Mediterranean.

Many other missions, the history of which is unknown to us, were carried on parallel with that of Philip. The very rapidity with which this first preaching was conducted was the cause of its success. In the year 38, five years after

the death of Jesus, and a year, perhaps, after Stephen's death, the whole of Palestine on the near side of Jordan had heard the good tidings from the mouth of the missionaries who had set forth from Jerusalem. Galilee, for its part, retained the sacred seed, and probably sowed it around, although nothing is known of the missions proceeding thence. Perhaps the city of Damascus, which, about the epoch we have reached, had Christians also, received the faith of the Galilean preachers.

Chapter X.

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

But the year 38 brought the youthful Church a very different conquest. It is in the course of this year, in fact, that can presumably be placed the conversion of that Saul whom we found abetting the stoning of Stephen, the chief agent of the persecution of 37, and the man who was to become, by a mysterious stroke of grace, the most ardent of the disciples of Jesus.

Saul was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, in the year 10 or 12 of our era. In accordance with the fashion of the time, his name had been Latinised into that of "Paul." Nevertheless, he only bore this latter name consistently after he had taken up his rôle as the Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul was of the purest Jewish blood. His family—native, perhaps, of the town of Gischala in Galilee—claimed to belong to the tribe of Benjamin. His father held the rank of Roman citizen. No doubt one of his ancestors had purchased this qualification or acquired it by his services. It may be conjectured that his grandfather had obtained it for having assisted Pompey at the time of the Roman conquest (63 B.C.). His family, like all the good old Jewish houses, belonged to the Pharisee party. Paul was brought up in the most rigorous principles of that sect, and if, later, he repudiated its narrow dogmas, he always retained its fervent faith, its severity and exaltation.

In the Augustan epoch Tarsus was a very flourishing city. The population belonged for the most part to the Greek and Aramæan races; but Jews were fairly numerous, as in all the commercial cities. Taste for letters and sciences was widely diffused in Tarsus, and no city in the world, Athens and Alexandria not excepted, was so rich in schools and scientific institutes. The number of learned men whom Tarsus produced, or who pursued their studies there, is truly extraordinary. But we are not to conclude from this that Paul received a very careful Greek education. The Jews rarely frequented profane educational establishments. The most renowned schools of Tarsus were the schools of rhetoric. The first thing learnt at such schools was classical Greek. It is incredible that a man who had taken even elementary lessons in grammar and rhetoric, could have written the grotesque and incorrect language, so little Hellenic in its turn of expression, which is that of the letters of St. Paul. He habitually and fluently talked in Greek; he wrote, or rather dictated, in that tongue; but his Greek was that of the Hellenistic Jews, a Greek encumbered with Hebraisms and Syriacisms, which

must have been scarce intelligible to a lettered man of the time, and which is only to be properly understood by seeking the Syriac expression which Paul had in his mind when dictating. He himself recognises the vulgar and uncouth character of his language. When he could, he spoke "Hebrew"—that is to say, the Syro-Chaldaic of the time. It was in this language that he thought; it was in this language that the inward voice spoke to him on the road to Damascus.

Nor does his doctrine betray any direct borrowing from Greek philosophy. The verse quoted from Menander's *Thaïs*, to be found in his writings, is one of those proverbial monostichs, which were in everyone's mouth, and which one could cite very well without having read the originals. Two other quotations, one from Epimenides, the other from Aratus, which are put under his name, but which it is by no means certain that he made, are also to be explained by borrowings at second-hand. Paul's culture is almost exclusively Jewish; it is in the Talmud much rather than in classical Greece that his analogues are to be sought. A few general ideas to which philosophy had given wide circulation, and which could be known without a single book of the philosophers being opened, alone reached him. His method of reasoning is of the strangest kind. Assuredly, he knew nothing of the peripatetic logic. His syllogism is not in the least that of Aristotle; on the contrary, his dialectic has the greatest resemblance to that of the Talmud. Paul usually lets himself be led by words much more than by ideas. Some word that he has running in his head masters him, and guides him to an order of ideas very remote from the principal object. His transitions are abrupt, his developments interrupted, his periods often suspended. Never was writer more unequal. One would vainly search through all literatures for a phenomenon so grotesque as that of a sublime page, like the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, side by side with feeble arguments, laboured repetitions, fastidious subtleties.

His father early destined him to be a rabbi. But, according to common usage, he was taught a trade. Paul was a tent-maker, or, if you will, a worker in those coarse fabrics of Cilicia which were called *cilicium*. On various occasions he exercised this trade; he had no patrimony. He had one sister at least, whose son lived in Jerusalem. The indications we have of a brother and other relatives, who are supposed to have embraced Christianity, are very vague and uncertain.

Refinement of manners being, according to the ideas of the modern bourgeoisie, proportionate to fortune, we should be inclined from the preceding to figure Paul as a man of the people, ill-bred and of no distinction. This would be an entirely false conception. His courtesy, when he liked, was extreme; his manners exquisite. Despite the incorrectness of the style, his letters reveal a man of much wit, finding in the loftiness of his emotions exceptionally happy expressions. Never did correspondence reveal more exquisite attentions, finer shades of meaning, more amiable timidities and hesitations. One or two of his pleasantries grate on us. But what spirit! what wealth of delightful sayings! what a temperament! One feels that his character, at moments when passion did not make him irritable and sullen, must have been that of a polished, assiduous, warm-hearted man, sometimes susceptible, and a little inclined to be jealous. Inferior before the great public, such men have, in the midst of little Churches, immense advantages, by the attachment which they inspire, by their practical abilities, and by their skilful manner of escaping from the gravest difficulties.

Paul's appearance was poor, and apparently did not correspond with the grandeur of his soul. He was ugly, short in figure, thick-set and bent. His broad shoulders grotesquely bore a diminutive bald head. His wan face was, so to speak, invaded by a thick

beard, an aquiline nose, piercing eyes, and black eyebrows which met on his forehead. There was nothing imposing in his speech. A certain timidity, awkwardness, and incorrectness at first gave a poor idea of his eloquence. Like a man of tact, he himself insisted on his outward deficiencies, and profited from them. The Jewish race has this remarkable characteristic, that it at once presents types of the greatest beauty and of the most utter ugliness; but Jewish ugliness is something quite apart. Some of those strange visages which at first provoke a smile assume, so soon as they are lighted up, a kind of profound splendour and majesty.

Paul's temperament was not less peculiar than his exterior. His constitution, evidently very tough, since it supported a life full of fatigues and sufferings, was not a healthy one. He is constantly alluding to his physical weakness; he represents himself as one who does no more than breathe—sick, worn-out, and, in addition, timid, lacking appearance and prestige, lacking anything to make an effect, so that people show merit in not being repelled by such miserable externals. Elsewhere he hints mysteriously at a secret trial, at "a thorn in the flesh," which he compares to an angel of Satan who buffets him, and whom God has permitted to haunt him lest he should be over-proud. Thrice he has begged the Lord to deliver him from it; thrice has the Lord replied: "My grace is sufficient for thee."[1] It was apparently some infirmity; for to understand it as the craving for carnal pleasures is scarce possible, since he himself tells us elsewhere that he was insensible to them. It appears that he did not marry; the utter frigidity of his temperament, the result of the unparalleled ardours of his brain, is shown by his whole life; he boasts of it with an assurance, not wholly exempt from affectation perhaps, which, at any rate, has an unpleasant flavour for us.

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 7–9.

He came young to Jerusalem, and entered, it is said, the school of Gamaliel the Old. Gamaliel was the most clear-sighted man in Jerusalem. As the name of Pharisee was applied to every Jew of standing who was not of the priestly families, Gamaliel passed for being a member of that sect. But he had not its narrow and exclusive spirit. He was an enlightened liberal, understanding the pagans, familiar with Greek. Possibly the broad ideas professed by St. Paul, when he had become a Christian, were reminiscent of the teachings of his first master; yet it must be confessed that moderation was not the first thing that he learnt from Gamaliel. In the burning atmosphere of Jerusalem Paul reached an extreme degree of fanaticism. He was at the head of the young Pharisee party, with its rigour and exaltation, which carried attachment to the national past to the last excesses. He was not acquainted with Jesus, and had not joined in the bloody scene on Golgotha. But we have found him taking an active part in the murder of Stephen, and figuring in the front rank of the persecutors of the Church. He breathed threatenings and slaughter, and rushed about Jerusalem like a downright madman, bearing a mandate which authorised all his brutalities. He went from synagogue to synagogue, forcing timid folk to deny the name of Jesus, and bringing scourging or imprisonment on the others. When the Church of Jerusalem was scattered, his rage spread to the neighbouring towns; the progress which the new faith was making exasperated him, and, learning that a group of believers had formed at Damascus, he asked the high priest, Theophilus, son of Hanan, for letters to the synagogue of that city which should grant him powers to arrest evil-thinking persons and bring them bound to Jerusalem.

The demoralisation of the Roman authority in Judæa since the death of Tiberius explains these arbitrary vexations. The insane Caligula was on the throne. The administration was getting

disordered on every side. Fanaticism had won all that the civil power had lost. After the dismissal of Pilate and the concessions made to the natives by Lucius Vitellius, the principle observed was to let the country govern itself by its own laws. A thousand local tyrannies profited by the weakness of a power grown listless. Damascus, moreover, had just passed into the hands of the Nabatæan King Hartat, or Haritha, whose capital was at Petra. This brave and powerful prince, after beating Herod Antipas and holding his own against the Roman forces under the command of the imperial legate, Lucius Vitellius, had been marvellously served by fortune. The news of the death of Tiberius (March 16th, 37) had put a sudden check on Vitellius. Haritha had seized Damascus and installed there an ethnarch, or governor. The Jews at the time of the new occupation formed a considerable party. They were numerous at Damascus, and practised proselytism on a great scale, notably among women. It was desired to conciliate them; the invariable method of gaining them over was to make concessions to their self-government, and every such concession was a licence for religious violences. To punish, to slay those who did not think as they did: such was what they called independence and freedom.

Paul, on leaving Jerusalem, no doubt took the usual route, and crossed the Jordan by the "Bridge of Jacob's Daughters." His cerebral excitement was at its height; at moments he was troubled and shaken. Passion is not a rule of faith. The impassioned man goes from one belief to another radically diverse; but he holds it with the same fury. Like all strong souls, Paul was near loving what he hated. Was he sure, after all, that he was not thwarting the work of God? Perhaps his master Gamaliel's ideas, so moderate and so just, returned to his mind. Often such ardent souls have terrible reactions. He sustained the charm of those whom he tortured. The better those good sectaries were known, the better they were loved. Now, none knew them so well as their persecutor. At moments he believed he saw the gentle face of the master, who inspired so much patience in his disciples, looking upon him with an expression of pity and tender reproach. What was told of the appearances of Jesus, conceived as an aerial being sometimes visible, impressed him much; for at epochs and in countries where there is belief in the marvellous, the miraculous narratives are equally incumbent on the opposed parties; the Mussulmans fear the miracles of Elijah, and, like the Christians, ask supernatural cures of St. George and St. Anthony. Paul, after having passed through Ituræa, had entered the great plain of Damascus. He approached the city, and was probably already threading the gardens which surrounded it. It was noon. Paul had several companions with him, and apparently travelled on foot.

The road from Jerusalem to Damascus has scarcely changed. It is that which, leaving Damascus in a south-westerly direction, crosses the fine plain, watered by the tributaries of both the Abana and the Pharpar, on which occur at intervals to-day the villages of Darâya, Kaukab, and Sasa. The spot with which we are concerned, and which was to be the scene of one of the most important incidents in the history of humanity, cannot be sought beyond Kaukab (four hours from Damascus). It is even likely that the point in question was much nearer the city, and that we should be correct in locating it about Darâya (an hour and a half from Damascus), or between Darâya and the extremity of the Maidan. Paul had before him the city, some buildings of which must already have been visible through the trees; behind him was the majestic dome of Hermon, with its furrows of snow, which make it resemble the hoary head of an old man; on his right the Hauran, the two little parallel ranges which confine the lower

course of the Pharpar and the tumuli of the lake region; on his left, the last spurs of the Antilibanus reaching over to Hermon. The impression given by those richly-cultivated fields, those delightful orchards, divided one from another by ditches, and brimming with the most beautiful fruits, is one of peace and happiness. Imagine a shady road opening out upon a rich tract of soil constantly watered by irrigation canals, with sloping banks on either hand, and winding through olive trees, walnuts, apricots, and plums, bound together by festooned vines; and you will have the scene of the strange event, which exercised so great an influence upon the world's faith. You can scarce believe yourself in the East in those environs of Damascus; and what especially fills the soul on leaving behind the arid and burning regions of Gaulonitis and Ituræa is the joy of finding once again the works of men and the bounties of heaven. From the remotest antiquity until our own days, all this zone which girdles Damascus with freshness and well-being has had but one name, has inspired but one dream—that of the "paradise of God."

If Paul encountered terrible visions there, it was because he bore them in his own mind. Every step that he made towards Damascus awakened in him poignant perplexities. The hateful part of executioner which he was to play was growing unsupportable. The houses, of which he began to catch glimpses, were perhaps those of his victims. The thought obsessed him, slackened his pace; he would fain have advanced no further; he imagined himself resisting a goad which pressed him forward. The fatigue of his journey, combined with this misgiving, weighed him down. He apparently had inflamed eyes, possibly incipient ophthalmia. In such long journeys on foot, the last hours are the most dangerous. In them all the weakening influences of the past days accumulate; the nervous forces are relaxed; a reaction takes place. Perhaps also the abrupt transition from the sun-scorched plain to the cool shades of the gardens brought on a crisis in the morbid and seriously shaken organisation of the fanatical wayfarer. Virulent fevers, accompanied by delirium, are quite sudden in that climate. In a few minutes one is, so to speak, prostrated as by a thunderbolt. When the fit has passed, the impression is retained of a profound darkness traversed by flashes of lightning, in which images have been descried, traced on a black background. What is certain is that a terrible stroke deprived Paul in an instant of what distinct consciousness remained to him, and threw him senseless on the ground.

It is impossible, with the accounts which we possess of this singular incident, to say if there was some external cause for the crisis which brought Christianity its most ardent Apostle. In such cases, moreover, the external cause is of small importance. It was the spiritual state of St. Paul, it was his remorse on nearing the city where he was to consummate his misdeeds, which were the true causes of his conversion. For my part, I much prefer the hypothesis of an occurrence personal to Paul, and perceptible to him alone. It is not unlikely, however, that there may have been a sudden outburst of storm. The flanks of Hermon are the point of formation for thunderstorms unequalled in violence. The coolest spirits cannot pass through those terrific rains of fire without emotion. We must bear in mind that, for the whole of antiquity, phenomena of this order were divine revelations; that, with the ideas then held of Providence, nothing was fortuitous; that each man was accustomed to bring into relation with himself the natural happenings around him. For the Jews, in particular, thunder was ever the voice of God, lightning the fire of God. Paul was under the shock of the wildest agitation. It was natural that he should ascribe to the voice of the storm what he had in his own heart. It matters little whether a feverish delirium, induced

by sunstroke or ophthalmia, suddenly seized on him; or whether a lightning flash dazzled him for long; or whether a thunder-clap threw him to the ground, and caused a cerebral disturbance, which, for a time, obliterated the sense of sight. The Apostle's own recollections in this respect seem to have been somewhat confused; he was convinced that the incident had been supernatural, and such a view did not permit him clear consciousness of the material details. These cerebral disturbances sometimes have a kind of retroactive effect, and completely cloud all memory of the moments preceding the crisis. Paul, moreover, tells us himself that he was subject to visions; a circumstance which would have been insignificant to anyone else must have been enough to put him out of his mind.

Amid the hallucinations, to which all his senses were a prey, what did he see, what did he hear? He saw the face which had been haunting him for several days past, he saw the phantom about which so many stories were in circulation. He saw Jesus himself, saying to him in Hebrew: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"[1] Impetuous natures pass as a whole from one extreme to the other. There are for them what do not exist for cold temperaments—solemn moments, minutes that decide the rest of a lifetime. Thoughtful men do not change; they transform themselves. Ardent spirits, on the contrary, change, and do not transform themselves. Dogmatism is like a Nessus shirt which they cannot throw off. They must have a pretext for love and hate. Only our Western races have been capable of producing those broad, subtle, strong, and flexible intellects, which no passing illusion diverts from their course, which no vain affirmation seduces. The East has never had men of that stamp. In a few seconds all his deepest thoughts crowded one upon another in Paul's soul. The horror of his conduct vividly flashed before him. He saw himself covered with the blood of Stephen; that martyr appeared to him as his father, his teacher. He was touched to the quick, utterly unhinged. But, in effect, all he had done was to change his fanaticism. His sincerity, his need of absolute faith, forbade him middle terms. It was clear that one day he would develop the same fiery zeal for Jesus that he had used in persecuting him.

Paul entered Damascus with the help of his companions, who led him by the hand. They left him at the house of a certain Judas, who dwelt in the street called Straight, a great thoroughfare with colonnades, more than a mile long and a hundred feet wide, which crossed the city from east to west, and the course of which forms to this day, with some deviations, the chief artery of Damascus. The dazzlement and delirium did not diminish in intensity. For three days Paul, preyed on by fever, neither ate nor drank. What, during this crisis, passed through a burning head, maddened by a violent shock, can easily be guessed. There was talk in his presence of the Christians of Damascus, and, in particular, of one Ananias, who appears to have been the head of the community. Paul had often heard boasts of the miraculous powers of the new believers with respect to diseases; the idea that laying on of hands would release him from his present state took hold of him. His eyes were still much inflamed. Among the images which succeeded each other in his brain, he believed he saw Ananias enter, and make on him the sign familiar to Christians. Thenceforth he was convinced that he would owe his cure to Ananias. The latter was informed; he came, spoke gently to the sick man, called him his brother, and laid his hands upon him. From that moment peace returned into the soul of Paul. He believed himself healed, and, the disease being primarily of a neurotic nature, he really was so. Small scabs or scales fell from his eyes, it is said; he ate and regained strength.

[1] *Acts* ix. 4.

Almost immediately he was baptised. The doctrines of the Church were so simple that he had nothing new to learn. On the spot he was a Christian, a perfect Christian. From whom, moreover, could he have had lessons? Jesus himself had appeared to him. He had had his own vision of the risen Jesus, like James, like Peter. It was by direct revelation that he had learnt all. Paul's proud and resolute nature reappeared at this juncture. Struck down upon the road, he was fain to submit, but to submit to Jesus alone, to Jesus who had left his Father's right hand to come to convert and instruct him. Such was the basis of his faith; such was one day to be the point of departure for his pretensions. He was to maintain that it was by design he did not go to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion, to put himself in touch with those who had been Apostles before him; that he had received his own personal revelation, and owed nothing to any man; that he was an Apostle like the Twelve by the divine institution and direct commission of Jesus; that his doctrine was the good one, even though an angel might assert the contrary. With this proud being a serious peril was to enter the little band of the poor in spirit which, up till now, had constituted Christianity. It was to be a real miracle, that his violences and unbending personality did not shatter all. And yet how precious an element, by the side of the narrow, timid, undecided spirit of the Jerusalem saints, was his audacity, his power of initiative, his decision! Assuredly, had Christianity remained in the hands of these worthy folk, shut up in a communistic conventicle of illuminati, it would have died out like Essenism, almost without leaving a memory behind it. It was the refractory Paul who was to make its fortune, and who, at risk of all dangers, was to take it across the high seas. Beside the obedient believer tacitly receiving his faith from his superior, there was to be the Christian untrammelled of all authority, believing only by personal conviction. Protestantism already existed five years after the death of Jesus; St. Paul was its illustrious founder. No doubt Jesus had not foreseen such disciples; yet it was they, perhaps, who were to contribute most to the life of his work, and to the assurance of his eternity.

Violent natures, inclined to proselytism, only change in the object of their passion. As fervent for the new faith as he had been for the old, St. Paul, like Omar, passed in a day from persecutor to Apostle. He did not return to Jerusalem, where his position in relation to the Twelve would have been somewhat delicate. He remained at Damascus and in the Hauran, and, for three years (38–41), preached there that Jesus was the son of God. Herod Agrippa I. had the sovereignty of the Hauran and the adjoining territories; but on several points his power was nullified by that of the Nabatæan king Haritha. The decadence of the Roman power in Syria had given over to the ambitious Arab the great and wealthy city of Damascus, as well as part of the regions beyond the Jordan and Hermon which were then beginning their civilisation. Another emir, Sohæmus, possibly a relative or lieutenant of Haritha, had himself invested with Ituræa by Caligula. It was amid this great Arab awakening, on this strange soil where an energetic race was brilliantly developing its feverish activity, that Paul diffused the first fire of his Apostle's soul. It may be that the imposing material movement, which was transforming the country, may have injured the success of a preaching which was wholly idealistic, and founded on belief in the approaching end of the world. There is, indeed, no trace to be found of a Church of Arabia established by St. Paul. If the Hauran region became, about 70, one of the most important centres of Christianity, it owed it to the emigration of the Christians of Palestine, and it was the foes of Paul, the Ebionites, who had their chief settlement in that locality.

At Damascus, where there were many Jews, Paul had more hearers. He went into the synagogues, and indulged in warm arguments to prove that Jesus was the Christ. The amazement of the faithful was extreme; he who had persecuted their brethren of Jerusalem and who had come to enchain them—behold him grown their first apologist! There was something in his audacity, his eccentricity, that alarmed them, indeed; he was solitary; he took counsel of no man; he did not form a school; he was regarded with more curiosity than sympathy. It was felt that he was a brother, but a brother of an entirely special species. He was believed incapable of treachery; but good and commonplace natures always have a feeling of mistrust and dread in the presence of powerful and original natures, which, they feel well assured, must one day escape them.

Chapter XI.

PEACE AND INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF JUDÆA

From the year 38 to the year 44 no persecution appears to have weighed upon the Church. The faithful, no doubt, observed the precautions which they neglected before Stephen's death, and shunned speaking in public. Perhaps, too, the disgrace of the Jews, who, during the whole of the second part of Caligula's reign, were at strife with that prince, contributed to favour the youthful sect. The Jews, indeed, persecuted the more, the better understanding they were on with the Romans. To buy or reward their peaceableness, the latter were inclined to augment their privileges, and, in particular, that to which they clung most, the right to slay those whom they deemed unfaithful to the Law. Now, it so happens that the years which we have reached counted among the stormiest in the history, always a troublous one, of that singular people.

The antipathy which the Jews, by their moral superiority, their grotesque customs, and also by their hardness, excited in the populations amid which they lived, had reached its highest pitch, especially at Alexandria. These accumulated hatreds profited for satisfaction by the accession to the Empire of one of the most dangerous madmen who have ever reigned. Caligula, at least after the disease which finally completed the derangement of his mental faculties (October, 37), afforded the hideous spectacle of a maniac ruling the world with the vastest powers that ever man had had at command. The disastrous law of Cæsarism rendered such horrors possible, and made them irremediable. This state of things lasted three years and three months. One is ashamed to relate in a serious history what is to follow. Before entering on the narration of these saturnalia, we must say with Suetonius: *Reliqua ut de monstro narranda sunt.*

The most inoffensive pastime of the madman was solicitude for his own divinity. Therein he infused a kind of

bitter irony, a mixture of the serious and the comic (for the monster did not lack wit), and a deep derision of the human race. The enemies of the Jews saw how they could profit by this mania. The religious degradation of the world was such that not a protest was raised against the sacrileges of the Cæsar; each worship was eager to ascribe to him the titles and honours which it reserved for its gods. It is to the eternal glory of the Jews that, amid all this base idolatry, they uttered the cry of conscientious indignation. The principle of intolerance which was implicit in them, and which led them to so many cruel deeds, in this case displayed its finer side. Alone affirming that their religion was the absolute religion, they did not bend to the hateful caprice of the tyrant. This entailed on them endless vexations. It sufficed for there to be in a town a man displeased with the synagogue, malicious or simply mischievous, to bring about terrible consequences. One day it was an altar to Caligula which was found set up on the spot where the Jews could least endure it. Another day it was a mob of rough lads, crying abuse because the Jews alone declined to place the Emperor's statue in their houses of prayer; then there was a rush to the synagogues and oratories; Caligula's bust was installed therein; the poor wretches were given the alternative, either of renouncing their religion or committing high treason. Frightful persecutions followed.

Such practical jokes had already been played several times, when a still more diabolical idea was suggested to the Emperor; it was that of putting a colossal golden image of himself in the sanctuary of the Temple of Jerusalem, and of having the Temple itself dedicated to his own divinity. This loathsome intrigue all but hastened by thirty years the revolt and ruin of the Jewish nation. The moderation of the imperial legate, Publius Petronius, and the intervention of King Herod Agrippa, a favourite of Caligula, staved off the catastrophe. But, until the moment when the sword of Chærea delivered the earth from the most execrable tyrant it has ever had to suffer, the Jews everywhere lived in a state of terror. Philo has preserved for us the details of the extraordinary scene which took place, when the deputation, which he headed, was admitted to see the Emperor. Caligula received them while on a visit to the villas of Mæcenas and Lamia, near the sea, in the vicinity of Pozzuoli. He was in a merry vein that day. Helicon, his favourite jester, had been telling him all sorts of tomfooleries about the Jews. "Ah!" he said to them with a bitter laugh and showing his teeth, "so it is you, then, who alone are unwilling to recognise me as god, and prefer to worship one whom you cannot so much as name?" He accompanied these words with a horrible blasphemy. The Jews shuddered; their Alexandrian adversaries were the first to speak: "You would detest, Sire, these people and all their nation still more, were you but aware of their loathing of you; for they were the only men who did not sacrifice for your health, when all peoples were doing so." At these words, the Jews cried out that it was a calumny, and that they had thrice offered for the Emperor's prosperity the most solemn sacrifices of their religion. "Be it," said Caligula with a very droll gravity, "you have sacrificed; that was well; but it is not to me that you have sacrificed. What advantage do I reap?" Whereupon, turning his back upon them, he began to wander about the apartments, giving orders for repairs, going up and down without pause. The unhappy deputies (among them Philo, aged eighty, perhaps the most venerable man of the age, since Jesus was no more) followed him upstairs and downstairs, out of breath, trembling, and jostled by those present. Suddenly returning, Caligula exclaimed: "By the way, why do you not eat pork?" The flatterers burst out laughing, while the court officials admonished them in a severe tone that they lacked respect to

the majesty of the Emperor by immoderate mirth. The Jews faltered; one of them blurted out awkwardly: "But there are people who do not eat lamb." "Ah, those now," said the Emperor, "are quite right; it is very savourless meat." He then feigned to inquire into their business; but scarce had their harangue begun than he left them to give orders for the decoration of a room which he wished ornamented with polished stone. He came back, affecting an air of moderation, asked the envoys if they had anything to add, and, as they resumed the interrupted discourse, turned his back on them to go and see another room, which he was having adorned with paintings. This tiger-like sport, in which he played with his prey, lasted for hours. The Jews expected death. But, at the last moment, the brute's claws were drawn in. "Come," said Caligula, as he passed by them again, "decidedly these folk are less guilty than pitiable for not believing in my divinity." This is how the gravest questions could be treated under the abominable régime which the world's baseness had created, which a populace and soldiery, equally vile, cherished, and which the almost universal cowardice kept in being.

It is easy to understand how so strained a situation must have deprived the Jews, in the time of Marullus, of much of the audacity which made them use such haughty speech to Pilate. The Christians, who had already almost broken away from the Temple, must have been much less alarmed than the Jews by the sacrilegious schemes of Caligula. They were, moreover, too few in numbers for their existence to be known at Rome. The storm of the time of Caligula, like that which culminated in the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, passed over their heads and in some ways served them. All that weakened Jewish independence favoured them, since it was so much taken from the power of a suspicious orthodoxy, supporting its pretensions by severe penalties.

This period of tranquillity was fruitful in internal developments. The infant Church was divided into three provinces: Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee, to which, no doubt, was attached Damascus. Jerusalem had its absolutely uncontested primacy. The Church of that city, which had been scattered after the death of Stephen, was speedily reconstructed. The Apostles had never left the city. The brothers of the Lord continued to live there and enjoy high authority. It does not seem that this new Church of Jerusalem was organised on such rigorous lines as the former; community of goods was not resumed in all its strictness. But a great fund for the poor was established, into which were to be paid the alms which the individual Churches sent up to the mother Church, the origin and permanent source of their faith.

Peter made frequent apostolic journeys in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. He always enjoyed high repute as a thaumaturgist. At Lydda, in particular, he passed for having healed a paralytic called Æneas, a miracle which was said to have led to many conversions in the plain of Sharon. From Lydda he betook himself to Joppa, a city which appears to have been a centre for Christianity. Towns inhabited by the working class, by seafaring folk, and poor people, in which the orthodox Jews did not predominate, were those in which the sect found the best reception. Peter made a long stay at Joppa, in the house of a tanner called Simon, who lived near the sea. The leather industry was an almost unclean trade; it was not thought right to associate with those who practised it, so that the curriers were reduced to dwelling in quarters apart. Peter, in selecting such a host, afforded a sign of his indifference to Jewish prejudices, and wrought for that ennoblement of the petty trades which, in great measure, is the work of the Christian spirit.

The organisation of charitable works was, above all, actively pursued. The Church of Joppa had an admirable woman, called in Aramaic *Tabitha*

(gazelle) and in Greek *Doras*, who devoted all her cares to the poor. She was wealthy, it seems, and distributed her means in alms. This worthy lady had formed a meeting of pious widows, who spent their days with her in weaving clothes for the poor. As the schism of Christianity with Judaism was not yet complete, it is probable that the Jews had the benefit of these acts of charity. "The saints and widows"[1] were thus pious persons, doing good to all, a kind of Beghards and Beguines, whom only the rigorists of a pedantic orthodoxy held as suspect, *fratricelli*, beloved by the people, devout, charitable, full of pity.

The germ of those associations of women, which are one of the glories of Christianity, thus existed in the earliest Churches of Judæa. At Joppa began the generation of those veiled, linen-clad women, who, through the centuries, were to carry on the tradition of the secrets of charity. Tabitha was the mother of a family which will not end, so long as there are miseries to solace and good womanly instincts to satisfy. Later, the story went that Peter had raised her from the dead. Alas! death, all insensate, all revolting as it is in such cases, is inflexible. When the most exquisite of souls is breathed forth, the decree remains irrevocable; the noblest of women responds no more than the vulgar and frivolous to the loving voices which call her back. But the ideal is not subject to the conditions of matter. Virtue and goodness escape the clutches of death. Tabitha had no need to be raised again. To give her four days more to spend in this mournful life, was it necessary to trouble her in her sweet and changeless eternity? Let her rest in peace; the day of the just shall come.

In these cities of very mixed population the problem of the admission of pagans to baptism urgently presented itself. Peter gave it much thought. One day, as he was praying at Joppa, on the terrace of the tanner's house, with that sea before him which was soon to bear the new faith to the whole Empire, he had a prophetic ecstasy. In the half-somnolent state in which he was plunged he believed that he felt hungry, and asked for something. Now, while it was being prepared for him, he saw the heavens open, and a sheet, knotted at the four corners, come down. Looking inside the sheet, he saw animals of every species, and believed that he heard a voice which said: "Kill and eat." And, on his objection that several of these animals were unclean, the reply came: "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."[1] This, it appears, was thrice repeated. Peter was convinced that these animals symbolically represented the mass of the Gentiles, whom God himself had just rendered fit for the holy communion of the kingdom of God.

The occasion for putting these principles in practice soon presented itself. From Joppa Peter went to Cæsarea. There he came in contact with a centurion called Cornelius. The Cæsarea garrison was formed, in part at least, of one of those cohorts of Italian volunteers which were called *Italicæ*. The full designation of this one may have been *cohors prima Augusta Italica civium Romanorum*. Cornelius was the centurion of this cohort, and, consequently, an Italian and a Roman citizen. He was a good man who, for long, had been attracted by the monotheistic worship of the Jews. He prayed and gave alms; in a word, practised the precepts of natural religion which Judaism implies; but he was not circumcised, he was not a proselyte in any sense of the word; he was a pious pagan, an Israelite at heart, nothing more. His whole household and some of the soldiers of his troop were, it was said, of the same leanings. Cornelius asked permission to enter the new Church. Peter, whose nature was open and kindly, granted it to him, and the centurion was baptised.

[1] *Acts* ix. 41.

[1] *Acts* x. 15.

Possibly Peter at the outset saw no difficulty in this; but, on his return to Jerusalem, he was much reproached. He had openly violated the Law; he had entered the houses of the uncircumcised and eaten with them. The question, in fact, was of capital importance; it was a matter of knowing if the Law were abrogated, if it were permissible to violate it by proselytism, if the Gentiles could be received on an equal footing into the Church. Peter, in his own defence, told of his vision at Joppa. Later, the centurion episode served as an argument in the great question of the baptism of the uncircumcised. To give it more force, it was supposed that each phase of this great affair had been marked by a command from heaven. It was related how, as a sequel to long prayers, Cornelius had beheld an angel who had ordered him to go and seek Peter at Joppa; how Peter's symbolical vision took place at the very hour when the messengers of Cornelius arrived; how God, moreover, had taken upon himself to legitimise all that had been done, since, the Holy Spirit having descended upon Cornelius and the people of his house, they had spoken tongues and declaimed in the fashion of the other believers. Was it natural to refuse baptism to people who had received the Holy Spirit?

The Church of Jerusalem was still composed exclusively of Jews and proselytes. The diffusion of the Holy Spirit upon uncircumcised persons, before they had been baptised, seemed a very extraordinary circumstance. It is probable that thenceforth there was a party opposed in principle to the admission of the Gentiles, and that Peter's explanations did not find unanimous acceptance. The author of the *Acts* would have it that everybody approved. But in a few years' time we shall find the discussion revived in a more acute form. The episode of the good centurion, like that of the Ethiopian eunuch, was, perhaps, accepted as an exception, justified by a revelation and an express command from God. The affair was far from being decided. It was the first internecine controversy in the Church; the paradise of inward peace had lasted six or seven years.

From about the year 40, the great question on which depended the future of Christianity thus appears to have been raised. Peter and Philip, with much justice, perceived the true solution, and baptised pagans. No doubt in the two narratives which the author of *Acts* gives us on this subject, and which are in part modelled one upon another, it is hard to ignore a system. The author of *Acts* belongs to a conciliatory party, favourable to the introduction of pagans into the Church, and unwilling to confess the violence of the dissensions stirred up by the affair. It is quite evident that in writing on the episodes of the eunuch, of the centurion, and even of the conversion of the Samaritans, the author does not merely wish to tell his tale, but, above all, seeks for precedents to justify an opinion. Yet, on the other hand, we cannot admit that he invents the circumstances which he relates. The conversions of the Candace's eunuch and the centurion Cornelius are probably real incidents, presented and transformed according to the needs of the argument, in view of which the book of *Acts* was compiled.

He who, ten or eleven years later, was to give this dispute so decisive a significance, Paul, did not yet concern himself with it. He was in the Hauran or at Damascus, preaching, refuting the Jews, giving to the service of the new faith as much ardour as he had shown in attacking it. Fanaticism, of which he had been the tool, was not slow to pursue him in his turn. The Jews resolved on his ruin. They obtained a warrant of arrest from the ethnarch who ruled Damascus in the name of Haritha. Paul hid himself. It was known that he was to leave the town; and the ethnarch, who wished to please the Jews, posted detachments at the gates to seize his person. But the brethren secured his escape in the night, by letting him down

in a basket from the window of a house overhanging the rampart.

Having eluded this peril, Paul turned his eyes upon Jerusalem. He had been a Christian for three years, but had not yet seen the Apostles. His inflexible character, which had little pliancy and was inclined to isolation, had, in the first instance, made him turn his back, in a sense, on the great family into which, despite himself, he had just entered, and prefer for his first apostolate a new country where no colleague was to be found. A desire to see Peter had, however, sprung up within him. He recognised his authority and called him, like everyone else, by the name of *Kepha*, "the Stone." He betook himself, then, to Jerusalem, reversing the route he had followed three years previously with intentions so different.

His position at Jerusalem was very false and embarrassed. It had, indeed, been reported there that the persecutor had become the most zealous of evangelists, and the first defender of the faith which he had wished to destroy. But great prejudices against him lingered on. Many dreaded some horrible conspiracy on his part. They had seen him so infuriated, so cruel, so eager to enter houses and rend the secrets of family life in his quest of victims, that they believed him capable of acting a hateful comedy, the better to ruin those whom he detested. He dwelt, it seems, in Peter's house. Several of the disciples remained deaf to his advances, and kept out of his way. A man of heart and will, Barnabas, played a decisive part at this moment. As a Cypriot and a new convert, he understood, better than the Galilean disciples, the position of Paul. He went to meet him, took him by the hand, so to speak, presented him to the more suspicious, and pledged his word for him. By this act of wisdom and penetration, Barnabas deserved in the highest degree of Christianity. It was he who divined Paul; it was to him that the Church owed the most remarkable of its founders. The fertile friendship of these two apostolic men, a friendship unclouded despite many disagreements, later brought about their collaboration in view of missions among the Gentiles. This great collaboration dated, in a sense, from Paul's first stay at Jerusalem. Among the causes of the world's faith are to be counted the generous impulse of Barnabas, holding out his hand to Paul, a man suspected and shunned, the profound intuition which made him discover an Apostle's soul under an air of humiliation, the freedom with which he broke the ice and threw down the dividing walls which the convert's unfortunate antecedents, and possibly certain traits of his character, had reared between him and his new brethren.

Paul, for the rest, seemed to make a point of avoiding the Apostles. It is he himself who says so, and he takes the trouble to affirm it with an oath; he saw none save Peter and James, the brother of the Lord. His stay lasted only a fortnight. It is certainly possible that, at the time when he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians (about 56), Paul may have been tempted by the necessities of the moment to falsify slightly the colouring of his relations with the Apostles, to represent them as more unsympathetic, more imperious than they really were. About 56 he held it essential to prove that he had received nothing from Jerusalem, that he was in no sense the mandatory of the council of the Twelve, established in that city. According to him, his attitude at Jerusalem must have been the high and proud bearing of a master who shuns contact with other masters, that he may not have the air of putting himself beneath them; and not the humble and repentant demeanour of a criminal ashamed of his past, as the author of *Acts* would have it. We cannot believe that in the year 41 Paul was animated with the kind of jealous solicitude in maintaining his own originality which he displayed later. The rarity of his interviews with the Apostles and the brevity of his sojourn at Jerusalem were probably due to the

embarrassment he felt before people of another nature than his own and prejudiced against him, much rather than to a subtle policy which would suppose him to have perceived, fifteen years beforehand, the possible drawbacks he might reap from frequenting their company.

In reality what must have put a kind of wall between the Apostles and Paul was, more especially, the difference of their character and education. The Apostles were all Galileans; they had not attended the great Jewish schools; they had seen Jesus; they remembered his words; they were good and pious souls, at times somewhat solemn and simple-minded. Paul was a man of action, full of fire and but little of a mystic, enrolled as by a higher force in a sect which was in nowise that of his first adoption. Revolt and protest were his habitual emotions. His Jewish learning was much more thorough than that of all his new colleagues. But, not having heard Jesus, not having been appointed by him, he had, in Christian ideas, great inferiority. Now, Paul was not the man to accept a secondary position. His proud individuality exacted a rôle apart. It was probably about this time that the strange idea had birth in him, that, after all, he had no reason to envy those who had known Jesus and had been chosen by him, since he also had seen Jesus, had received a direct revelation and the mandate of his apostleship from Jesus. Even those who were honoured with a personal vision of the risen Christ had nothing more than he. Considering it was the last, his vision had not been the less remarkable. It had been manifested under circumstances which specially stamped it with importance and distinction. How profound an error! The echo of the voice of Jesus was to be heard in the speech of the humblest of his disciples. With all his Jewish learning Paul could not make up for the immense disadvantage to him which resulted from his tardy initiation. The Christ whom he had seen on the road to Damascus was not, whatever he might say, the Christ of Galilee; it was the Christ of his imagination, of his own senses. Although he was careful to collect the master's words, it is clear that we have in him a disciple at second-hand. Had Paul met Jesus in his lifetime, it is doubtful if he would have adhered to him. His doctrine was to be his own, not that of Jesus; the revelations of which he was so proud were the fruit of his own brain.

These ideas, which he dared not yet make known, rendered his stay at Jerusalem unpleasant. At the end of fifteen days he took leave of Peter and departed. He had seen so few persons that he ventured to say that no one in the Churches of Judæa was acquainted with his face, or knew aught of him save by hearsay. Later he ascribed this sudden departure to a revelation. He related how one day, praying in the Temple, he had an ecstasy, how he beheld Jesus in person, and received his command to leave Jerusalem with all possible haste, "because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me."[1] In exchange for these hard hearts, Jesus was supposed to have promised him the apostolate of distant nations and hearers more submissive to his voice. As for those who wished to efface the traces of the numerous intestine broils which the entrance of this intractable disciple caused in the Church, they asserted that Paul spent a somewhat long time in Jerusalem, living with the brethren on an entirely free footing, but that, having taken to preaching to the Hellenist Jews, he narrowly escaped death at their hands, and the brethren accordingly had to watch over his safety and have him taken to Cæsarea.

It is, indeed, probable that from Jerusalem he betook himself to Cæsarea. But he remained there for a very short time, and set out to travel through Syria and then Cilicia. He was no doubt already preaching, but independently and on no understanding with anyone else.

[1] *Acts* xxii. 18.

His native Tarsus was his habitual residence during this period of his apostolic life, which can be estimated at two years. Possibly the Churches of Cilicia may have owed their beginnings to him. However, Paul's life at this time was not such as we shall see it later. He did not assume the title of Apostle, which was then strictly reserved to the Twelve. It was only from the commencement of his association with Barnabas (in 45) that he entered on that career of sacred wayfaring and preaching which was to make him the type of the travelling missionary

Chapter XII.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

The new faith made amazing progress from one place to another. The members of the Church of Jerusalem who had been scattered on the death of Stephen, carrying their conquests all along the coast of Phœnicia, reached Cyprus and Antioch. At the outset they made it their absolute principle to preach only to the Jews.

Antioch, "the metropolis of the East," the third city of the world, was the centre of this Christendom of northern Syria. It was a city of more than half a million souls, almost as great as Paris before its recent extensions, and the residence of the imperial legate of Syria. Brought, in the first instance, by the Seleucidæ to a high degree of splendour, it had only profited by the Roman occupation. As a rule, the Seleucidæ had anticipated the Romans in taste for scenic decoration applied to great cities. Temples, aqueducts, baths, basilicas: nothing was lacking at Antioch of what went to make a great Syrian city of the epoch. The streets, lined with colonnades and adorned by statues where they crossed, had more symmetry and regularity here than anywhere else. A *Corso*, set out with four lines of columns, forming two covered arcades, with a wide roadway in the middle, passed right across the city to the length of thirty-six *stadia* (more than three miles). But Antioch had not only great buildings of public utility; it also had, what few Syrian towns possessed, masterpieces of Greek art, admirable statues, classical works of a delicacy of execution, which the age could no longer imitate. Antioch had from its foundation been a wholly Greek city. The Macedonians of Antigonus and Seleucus had brought into the lower Orontes region their most living memories, the worships, and the names of their own country. The Greek mythology had here, as it were, created for itself a second native land; it was claimed that a number of "holy places" could be shown throughout the country, connected with that mythology. The city was given up to the worship of Apollo and the nymphs. Daphne, an enchanting spot two short hours' journey from the city, recalled to the conquerors one of their gayest legends. It was a kind of plagiarism or counterfeit of the myths of the mother country, similar to those daring transpositions by which the primitive tribes bore with them on their wanderings their mythical geography, their Berecyntus, their Arvanda, their Ida, their Olympus. Those Greek fables constituted a very senile religion, one scarce more serious than the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. To it the ancient

religions of the land, in particular that of Mount Casius, added some measure of gravity. But Syrian frivolity, Babylonian charlatanism, all the impostures of Asia blending one with another at this frontier of two worlds, had made Antioch the capital of lies, the sink of all infamies.

Besides the Greek population, in fact, which was nowhere in the East (if Alexandria be excepted) so dense as here, Antioch still counted a considerable number of Syrian natives, speaking Syriac. These natives constituted a low class, inhabiting the suburbs of the great city and the populous villages which formed a vast urban area around it—Charandama, Ghisira, Gandigura, and Apate (Syriac names for the most part). Marriages between these Syrians and the Greeks being common—Seleucus, moreover, having decreed by a law that every alien who might settle in the city should become a citizen—Antioch, after three centuries and a half of existence, was one of the places in the world where blood was most mingled. Its spiritual degradation was frightful. It is the property of such centres of moral putrefaction to sink all races to the same level. The ignominy of certain Levantine towns, dominated by the spirit of intrigue, given over completely to base and cunning thoughts, can scarce afford us an idea of the depth of corruption which the human species reached at Antioch. It was an unheard-of conglomeration of mountebanks, charlatans, mimes, magicians, thaumaturgists, sorcerers, and cheating priests; a city of races, games, dances, processions, feasts, Bacchanalia; of unbridled luxury, all the follies of the East, the most morbid superstitions, the fanaticism of orgy. By turn servile and ungrateful, craven and insolent, the Antiochians were the consummate type of mobs devoted to Cæsarism, lacking fatherland, nationality, family honour, a name to cherish. The great *Corso* which crossed the city was as a theatre, through which rolled all day long the billows of a populace, futile, frivolous, fickle, riotous, at times witty, busy with songs, parodies, jests, and impertinences of every kind. The city was lettered, but its literature was purely rhetorical. The spectacular shows were curious; there were games in which choruses of naked girls were to be seen taking part in all the exercises, wearing nothing but a fillet; at the famous festival of Maïouma bands of courtesans bathed publicly in pools of clear water. It was all like an intoxication, a dream of Sardanapalus, in which, pell-mell, were unfolded all voluptuous delights, all debaucheries, not excluding certain delicacies. The river of filth which, flowing from the mouth of the Orontes, came to overwhelm Rome, had here its chief source. Two hundred decurions were engaged in arranging the liturgies and feasts. The municipality possessed vast public domains, the revenues of which the duumvirs shared among the poor citizens. Like all pleasure cities, Antioch had an infamous populace living on the public or on sordid means of gain.

The beauty of the works of art and the infinite charm of nature prevented this moral abasement from quite degenerating into hideousness and vulgarity. The site of Antioch is one of the most picturesque in the world. The city occupied the area between the Orontes and the slopes of Mount Silpius, one of the spurs of Mount Casius. Nothing could equal the abundance and beauty of the waters. The walls climbing the perpendicular crags, by a real triumph of military architecture, took in the summits of the mountains, and formed with the rocks, at a towering height, a jagged crown of marvellous effect. This arrangement of ramparts, combining the advantages of the ancient acropoles with those of the great walled towns, was usually preferred by Alexander's lieutenants, as is to be seen at Seleucia Pieria, at Ephesus, at Smyrna, and at Thessalonica. From it resulted surprising vistas. Antioch had within its walls mountains 700 feet high, towering rocks, torrents, precipices, deep ravines, waterfalls,

and inaccessible grottoes; in the midst of all these were delightful gardens. Thickly wooded with myrtles, flowering box, laurels, plants always green and of the tenderest green, and with rocks decked with carnations, hyacinths, and cyclamens, the uncultivated heights have the look of hanging gardens. The variety of flowers, the freshness of the turf composed of an infinite multitude of tiny gramineæ, the beauty of the planes which border the Orontes, inspire cheerfulness, something of that fragrant perfume which intoxicated the fine genius of John Chrysostom, and Libanius, and Julian. On the right bank of the river stretches a vast plain, bounded on one side by Amanus and the grotesquely-outlined hills of Pieria; on the other hy the plateaux of Cyrrhestica, behind which one suspects the perilous neighbourhood of the Arab and the desert. The valley of the Orontes, which opens to the west, puts this inland basin in communication with the sea, or, rather, with that vast world, amid which the Mediterranean has in all ages formed a kind of neutral highway and federal bond.

Among the various colonies which the liberal decrees of the Seleucidæ drew to the capital of Syria, that of the Jews was one of the most numerous; it dated from Seleucus Nicator, and enjoyed the same rights as the Greeks. Although the Jews had an ethnarch to themselves, they had very frequent intercourse with the pagans. Here, as in Alexandria, this intercourse often degenerated into quarrels and aggressions. From another point of view, it gave rise to an active religious propaganda. The official polytheism growing more and more inadequate for serious souls, Greek philosophy and Judaism attracted all those whom the vain pomps of paganism failed to satisfy. The number of proselytes was considerable. In the early days of Christianity Antioch had provided the Church of Jerusalem with one of its most influential men—Nicholas, one of the deacons. In the city there were excellent germs which waited but a ray of grace, to bloom and bear the finest fruits that had yet been seen.

The Church of Antioch owed its foundation to some believers, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, who had already preached much. So far they had only addressed themselves to Jews. But in a city where pure Jews, proselyte Jews, "people fearing God," or pagans half Jews, and pure pagans, lived together, small missions limited to a group of houses became impossible. The sentiment of religious aristocracy which swelled the Jews of Jerusalem with pride was non-existent in the great cities of purely profane civilisation, where the horizon was wider, and prejudices less deeply rooted. The Cypriot and Cyrenian missionaries were thus led to depart from their rule. They preached indifferently to Jews and Greeks.

The mutual feelings of the Jewish and pagan populations were apparently at this moment very bad. But circumstances of another order perhaps served the new ideas. The earthquake, which had greatly injured the city on March 23rd, 37, still occupied men's minds. The one topic of conversation in the city was a charlatan called Debborius, who pretended he could avert the return of such phenomena by absurd talismans. This kept minds fixed on supernatural matters. However it may have been, the success of the Christian preaching was very great. A young Church, ardent, innovating, full of promise, because composed of the most diverse elements, was in a short time established. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit were diffused therein, and it was thenceforth easy to foresee that this new Church, free from the narrow Mosaism which drew an impassable barrier around Jerusalem, would be Christianity's second cradle. Certainly, Jerusalem will ever remain the religious capital of the world. And yet the point of departure of the Church of the Gentiles, the primordial focus of Christian missions, was really Antioch. It was there that for the first time was

formed a Christian Church, unshackled from Judaism; it was there that was established the great propaganda of the apostolic age; it was there that St. Paul finally shaped himself. Antioch marks the second stage in the progress of Christianity. So far as Christian nobility is concerned, neither Rome, nor Alexandria, nor Constantinople can stand comparison with it.

The topography of ancient Antioch is so much effaced that one would vainly seek on its site, almost devoid of traces of the past, the point to which so many great memories must be attached. Here, as everywhere else, Christianity must have settled in the poor quarters among the petty tradesmen. The basilica called "Ancient" or "Apostolic" in the fourth century was situated in the so-called street of Singon, near the Pantheon. But where this Pantheon was we do not know. Tradition and certain vague analogies would suggest seeking the primitive Christian quarter in the direction of the gate which still retains the name of Paul, *Bâb Bolos*, and at the foot of the mountain called by Procopius *Stavrin*, which bears the south-eastern flank of the ramparts of Antioch. It was one of the parts of the town least rich in pagan monuments. The remains of ancient sanctuaries dedicated to St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John are still to be seen here. It appears to have been the quarter where Christianity lingered longest after the Mussulman conquest. It was, also, seemingly the quarter of the "saints," as opposed to the profane Antioch. The rock here is pierced like a bee-hive with caves which appear to have served for anchorites. When we pass across these steep declivities, where, about the fourth century, good Stylites, disciples at once of India and of Galilee, of Jesus and Sakya-Muni, looked down with disdain upon the voluptuous city from the height of their pillar or their flowery grot, it is probable that we are at no great distance from the abodes of Peter and Paul. The Church of Antioch is that whose history is most uninterrupted and comprises fewest fables. Christian tradition in a city where Christianity had such vigorous continuity may have its value.

The prevailing tongue of the Church of Antioch was Greek. It is likely, however, that the Syriac-speaking suburbs gave the sect numerous adherents. Already, consequently, Antioch held the germ of two rival, and later hostile, Churches, one speaking Greek and represented now by the Greeks of Syria, whether orthodox or Catholic; the other whose present representatives are the Maronites, who, having formerly spoken Syriac, preserve it still as a sacred language. The Maronites who, beneath their entirely modern Catholicism, conceal a high antiquity, are probably the last descendants of those Syrians anterior to Seleucus, of those suburban dwellers or *pagani* of Ghisira, Charandama, etc., who, from the earliest centuries, formed a Church apart, were persecuted as heretics by the orthodox Emperors, and fled into Lebanon, where, out of hatred of the Greek Church and by reason of deeper affinities, they made an alliance with the Latins.

As to the converted Jews of Antioch, they, also, were very numerous. But we must believe that they accepted brotherhood with the Gentiles from the first. It was on the banks of the Orontes that the religious fusion of races, dreamed by Jesus—let us say, rather, by six centuries of prophets—became a reality.

Chapter XIII.

THE IDEA OF A GENTILE APOSTOLATE—ST. BARNABAS

When what had occurred at Antioch became known at Jerusalem, the emotion was great. Despite the goodwill of some of the chief members of the Church of Jerusalem, Peter especially, the apostolic college continued a prey to the meanest prejudices. Whenever news came of the good tidings having been announced to pagans, it caused signs of dissatisfaction on the part of some of the elders. The man who now triumphed over this miserable jealousy, and prevented the exclusive maxims of the "Hebrews" from ruining the future of Christianity, was Barnabas. Barnabas was the most enlightened spirit of the Church of Jerusalem. He was the leader of the liberal party, which desired progress and an open Church to all. Already he had powerfully contributed to dispel the mistrust which had arisen against Paul. On this occasion he again wielded great influence. Sent as delegate of the apostolic body to Antioch, he saw and approved all that had been done; he declared that the new Church had but to continue on the path it had entered. Conversions went on taking place in large numbers. The living and creative force of Christianity seemed centred at Antioch. Barnabas, who, in his zeal, was ever eager to be at the point where energy was at its keenest, remained there. Antioch was thenceforth to be his Church; from it he was to exercise his most fertile ministry. Christianity has been unjust to this great man, in not according him a place in the front rank among its founders. All broad and sound ideas had Barnabas as a patron. His intellectual boldness was the counterpoise to what would have been the fatal infatuation of those narrow-minded Jews, who formed the conservative party of Jerusalem.

At Antioch a magnificent conception sprang up in this great heart. Paul was at Tarsus in a retirement which, for so energetic a man, must have been an agony. His false position, his inflexibility, his exaggerated pretensions, nullified part of his good qualities. He preyed upon himself and remained almost useless. Barnabas knew how to set to its true task that force, wasting away in a morbid and perilous solitude. A second time he held out his hand to Paul, and led the unsociable personality to the society of brethren whom he was fain to flee. He went himself to Tarsus, sought him out, and brought him to Antioch. This was what the stiffnecked old men of Jerusalem would never have been capable of doing. To win over the great, intractable, sensitive soul; to bend to the weaknesses, the humours of a man fiery, but intensely egoistic; to consent to be his inferior, to prepare, in forgetfulness of self, the most favourable field for the development of his activity: this assuredly is the highest pitch to which virtue can attain, and this is what Barnabas did for St. Paul. The greater part of the latter's glory reverts on the modest man who preceded him in all things, effaced himself before him, discovered his worth, brought him to the light, more than once prevented his failings from spoiling all, and the narrow ideas of others from driving him into revolt, thwarted in advance the irremediable wrong which petty personalities might have done the work of God.

For a whole year Barnabas and Paul

were united in this active collaboration. It was one of the most brilliant years, and undoubtedly the happiest, in the life of Paul. The fertile originality of these two great men raised the Church of Antioch to a height which no Church had hitherto attained. The capital of Syria was one of the points of the world where there was most awakening. In the Roman epoch, as in our own time, religious and social questions were chiefly ventilated in great conglomerations of men. A kind of reaction against the general immorality, which was later to make Antioch the home of the Stylites and hermits, was already perceptible. In that city the good doctrine thus found the best conditions for success which as yet it had encountered.

A circumstance of capital importance proves, moreover, that it was at Antioch that the sect first had full self-consciousness. It was in that city that it received a distinct name of its own. Up till then the adherents had called each other "the believers," "the faithful," "the saints," "the brethren," "the disciples"; but they had no official and public designation. It was at Antioch that the name of *Christianus* was invented. The termination is Latin, not Greek, which seems to suggest that it was created by the Roman authority, as a police term, like *Herodiani*, *Pompeiani*, and *Cæsariani*. In any case, it is certain that such a name was the work of the pagan population. It comprised a misunderstanding; for it implied that *Christus*, a translation of the Hebrew *Mashiah* (the Messiah), was a proper name. Several even of those who were little conversant with Jewish or Christian ideas must have been led by this name to suppose that *Christus* or *Chrestus* was a party leader still alive. The vulgar pronunciation, indeed, was *Chrestiani*.

The Jews, at all events, did not adopt, at least consistently, the name given by the Romans to their schismatic co-religionists. They continued to call the new sectaries "Nazarenes" or "Nazorenes," no doubt because they were accustomed to call Jesus *Han-nasri* or *Han-nosri*, "the Nazarene." This name has prevailed to our days throughout the East.

We are now at a very important moment. The hour is solemn at which a new creation receives its name; for the name is the determinate sign of existence. It is by name that an individual or collective being becomes himself and emerges from another. The formation of the word "Christian" thus marks the exact date when the Church of Jesus severed itself from Judaism. For a long while still the two religions were to be confounded; but this confusion was only to occur in countries where, if I may say so, the growth of Christianity was backward. For the rest, the sect promptly accepted the name which had been made for it, and deemed it a title of honour. When we consider that, ten years after the death of Jesus, his religion had already a name in the Greek and Latin tongues in the capital of Syria, we may well be amazed at the progress achieved in so short a time. Christianity has completely cut itself off from its mother's womb; the true conception of Jesus has triumphed over the indecision of his first disciples; the Church of Jerusalem is superseded; Aramaic, the language of Jesus, is unknown to part of his school; Christianity speaks Greek; it is finally launched in the great whirlpool of the Greek and Roman world, whence it will never more emerge.

The energy, the fever of ideas, which arose in this young Church must have been extraordinary in character. Great "spiritual" manifestations were frequent. All believed themselves inspired after diverse fashions. Some were "prophets," others "doctors." Barnabas, as his name indicates,[1] undoubtedly had the rank of prophet. Paul had no special title. Among the notables of the Church of Antioch were also mentioned Symeon, surnamed Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manæn, who had been foster-brother of

[1] See above, p. 61.

Herod Antipas, and must consequently have been advanced in years. All these persons were Jews. Among the converted pagans was already perhaps that Evodius who, at a certain epoch, seems to have held the first rank in the Church of Antioch. No doubt the pagans who were responsive to the first propaganda had, at the outset, some inferiority; they must have shone but little in the public displays of glossolalia, preaching, and prophecy.

Paul, amid this captivating society, let himself be borne on the current. Later he showed himself hostile to glossolalia, and it is probable that he never practised it. But he had many visions and direct revelations. It was apparently at Antioch that he had that great ecstasy which he relates in these terms: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."[1] Sober and practical as a rule, Paul nevertheless shared the ideas of his time on the supernatural. Like everyone else, he believed he wrought miracles; it was out of the question that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which passed for being common to all in the Church, could have been refused to him.

But spirits with such a flame burning within them could not confine themselves to these chimeras of an exuberant piety. There was a sudden turn to action. The idea of great missions destined to convert the pagans, beginning by Asia Minor, seized on every mind. Such an idea, had it come to birth at Jerusalem, could not have been realised. The Church of Jerusalem was devoid of financial resources. A great propagandist institution exacts a certain expenditure. But the whole of the common fund at Jerusalem went to feed the virtuous poor, and at times was insufficient. From every part of the world help had to be sent, that these noble beggars might not die of hunger. Communism had created at Jerusalem an irremediable misery and an utter incapacity for great enterprises. The Church of Antioch was exempt from such a plague. The Jews in the profane cities had acquired comfortable circumstances, in some cases great fortunes; the faithful entered the Church in possession of fairly considerable property. It was Antioch which supplied the capital for the foundation of Christianity. The complete difference in manners and spirit, which this fact alone must have caused between the two Churches, is easily conceivable. Jerusalem remained the city of God's poor, of the *Ebionim*, of the worthy Galilean dreamers, intoxicated and, as it were, dazed by promises of the kingdom of God. Antioch, almost a stranger to the word of Jesus, which it had not heard, was the Church of activity and progress. Antioch was the city of Paul; Jerusalem, the city of the old apostolic college, buried in its dreams, powerless before the new problems which were opening up, but dazzled by its incomparable privilege, and rich in its inestimable memories.

One circumstance, indeed, soon cast a light on all these features. Improvidence was such in the poor, famishing Church of Jerusalem that the least untoward accident impoverished the community. In a land where economic organisation did not exist, where commerce was but slightly developed, and where the sources of comfort were scanty, famines were inevitable. There was a terrible one in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius (44). When its symptoms began to be felt, the elders of Jerusalem thought of having recourse to the brethren of the wealthier Churches of Syria. An embassy of Hierosolymite prophets came to Antioch. One of them, called Agabus, who had the reputation of being highly gifted as a seer, found himself suddenly

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2–4.

possessed by the Spirit, and announced the scourge which was about to rage. The faithful of Antioch were greatly moved by the evils threatening the mother Church, of which they still considered themselves to be tributaries. They made a collection, to which each contributed as he could. Barnabas was entrusted with taking the proceeds to the brethren of Judæa. Jerusalem was for long still to remain the capital of Christianity. There were centred the things that were unique; only there were Apostles. But a great forward step was now taken. For several years there had been but one fully-organised Church—that of Jerusalem, the absolute centre of faith, whence all life flowed, to which all life ebbed back. Such was no longer the case. Antioch was a perfect Church, with the whole hierarchy of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Missions departed thence and thither returned. It was a second capital—or, to put it better, a second heart—which had its own action and exercised its strength in every direction.

It was even easy to foresee from now that the second capital was soon to win the day over the first. The decay of the Church of Jerusalem was, indeed, rapid. It is the property of institutions founded on communism to make a brilliant start, for communism always implies great enthusiasm, but very quickly to degenerate, communism being against human nature. In his fits of virtue man imagines he can utterly cast off egoism and heed for his own interests; egoism takes its revenge, by proving that absolute self-abnegation engenders graver evils than those which were supposed to have been avoided by the suppression of property.

Chapter XIV.

HEROD AGRIPPA I.'s PERSECUTION

Barnabas found the Church of Jerusalem in sore distress. The year 44 was a stormy one for it. Besides the famine, it saw the rekindling of the fire of persecution, which had slackened since the death of Stephen.

Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, had, since 41, succeeded in re-establishing the monarchy of his grandfather. Thanks to Caligula's favour, he had managed to unite under his rule Batanæa, Trachonitis, part of the Hauran, Abilene, Galilee, and Peræa. The ignoble part which he played in the tragi-comedy which gave Claudius the Empire made his fortune. This vile Oriental, as a reward for the lessons in baseness and perfidy which he had given at Rome, obtained Samaria and Judæa for himself, and for his brother Herod the little kingdom of Chalcis. He had left behind him at Rome the worst of reputations, and Caligula's atrocities were in part attributed to his counsels. Neither his army nor the pagan cities of Sebaste and Cæsarea, which he sacrificed to Jerusalem, loved him. But the Jews found him generous, magnificent, and sympathetic with their ills. He sought popularity among them, and affected an entirely different policy from that of Herod the Great. The latter lived his life much more in view of the Græco-Roman world than in view of the Jews. Herod Agrippa, on the contrary, loved Jerusalem, strictly observed the Jewish religion, affected scrupulosity, and never let a day pass without making his

devotions. He went so far as to accept the advice of the rigorists amiably, and took the trouble to justify himself from their reproaches. To the Hierosolymites he made a rebate of the tribute due to him from every house. In a word, the orthodox had in him a king after their own hearts.

It was inevitable that a prince of such a character should persecute the Christians. Sincere or not, Herod Agrippa was a Jewish sovereign in every sense of the word. The house of Herod, in the process of weakening, turned to devotion. Nothing more was heard of that broad, secular idea of the founder of the dynasty, aspiring to make the most diverse faiths dwell together under the common empire of civilisation. When Herod Agrippa, on his accession, first set foot in Alexandria, it was as king of the Jews that he was hailed; it was that title which irritated the populace and gave rise to endless fooleries. But what could a king of the Jews be, if not the guardian of the Law and traditions, a theocratic and persecuting sovereign? From Herod the Great, under whom fanaticism was wholly put down, to the breaking forth of the war which brought about the ruin of Jerusalem, there was thus a constant increase in religious fervour. Caligula's death (24th January, 41) had caused a favourable reaction to the Jews. Claudius, as a rule, treated them well, owing to the credit which Herod Agrippa and Herod, king of Chalcis, had with him. Not only did he decide in favour of the Jews of Alexandria in their quarrels with the inhabitants, and grant them the right of choosing an ethnarch; but he is said to have published an edict in which he accorded to the Jews throughout the Empire what he had accorded to those of Alexandria—that is to say, liberty to live according to their own laws, on the sole condition of their doing no harm to other faiths. Some attempts at vexations, similar to those which had occurred under Caligula, were repressed. Jerusalem greatly increased in size; the Bezetha quarter was incorporated with the city. The Roman authority scarce made itself felt, though Vibius Marsus, a prudent man, ripened by great responsibilities and of highly cultivated mind, who had succeeded Publius Petronius as imperial legate of Syria, from time to time pointed out to Rome the peril of these half-independent monarchies of the East.

The kind of feudal system which, since the death of Tiberius, had tended to prevail in Syria and the adjacent countries, was, indeed, a halt in the imperial policy, and had scarce other than evil consequences. The "kings" when they came to Rome were great personages, and wielded a detestable influence there. The corruption and degradation of the people, under Caligula especially, was in great part due to the sight of those miscreants, who were seen successively dragging their purple to the theatre, the palace of the Cæsar, the prisons. So far as the Jews were concerned, we have seen that self-government spelt intolerance. The high priesthood only quitted the family of Hanan at instants to pass into that of Boëthus, which was no less cruel and haughty. A sovereign anxious to please the Jews could not fail to grant them what they most loved—namely, severities against all who departed from rigorous orthodoxy.

Herod Agrippa, in fact, towards the end of his reign, became a violent persecutor. Some time before the Passover of 44 he had one of the chief members of the apostolic college, James, son of Zebedee, brother of John, beheaded. The affair was not given a religious colour; there was no inquisitorial process before the Sanhedrim; the sentence was decreed by virtue of the sovereign's arbitrary power, as in the case of John the Baptist. Encouraged by the good effect which this execution had upon the Jews, Herod Agrippa was loth to stop in so easy a vein of popularity. It was then the early days of the Passover feast, the usual time for an aggravation of fanaticism. Agrippa commanded Peter to be imprisoned in the tower of Antonia.

He wished to have him tried and put to death with great solemnity before the mass of the people then assembled.

Some circumstance, of which we are ignorant and which was held to be miraculous, opened Peter's prison. One evening, as several of the faithful were gathered together in the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where Peter usually dwelt, a knock at the door was suddenly heard. The maid-servant, called Rhoda, went to listen. She recognised Peter's voice. Transported with joy, instead of opening the door, she came running back and announced that Peter was there. She was treated as one demented. She swore that she spoke truly. "It is his angel," said several. Repeated knocking was heard; it was, indeed, he. Joy was unbounded. Peter at once had his deliverance announced to James, brother of the Lord, and to the rest of the faithful. It was believed that it was the angel of God who had entered the Apostle's prison and made his chains and bolts fall from him. Peter, in fact, related that it had all taken place while he was in a kind of ecstasy; that, having passed the first and second ward, and surmounted the iron gate leading to the city, the angel still kept him company to the end of one street before leaving him; that he then returned to himself and recognised the hand of God, who had sent a heavenly messenger to deliver him.

Agrippa survived these acts of violence but a short time. In the course of 44 he went to Cæsarea to celebrate games in honour of Claudius. There was an extraordinary concourse; the people of Tyre and Sidon, who had difficulties with him, came thither to cry him mercy. These festivities much displeased the Jews, both because they took place in the impure city of Cæsarea and because they were given in the theatre. Once already, the king having left Jerusalem under like circumstances, a certain Rabbi Simeon had proposed to declare him an alien to Judaism and to exclude him from the Temple. The king had condescended so far as to place the rabbi beside him at the theatre, to prove to him that nothing took place there contrary to the Law. Believing that he had thus satisfied the rigorists, Herod Agrippa let himself indulge his taste for profane displays. On the second day of the festival, he entered the theatre at an early hour of the morning, clad in cloth of silver of marvellous brilliancy. The effect of this resplendent tunic in the rays of the rising sun was extraordinary. The Phœnicians who thronged about the king lavished upon him adulations of a pagan type. "He is a God," they exclaimed, "and not a man." The king showed no indignation, and did not reprove this speech. He died five days later. Jews and Christians believed that he had been struck down for not having rejected with horror a blasphemous flattery. The Christian tradition would have it that he died of the punishment reserved for the foes of God—a vermicular disease. The symptoms reported by Josephus would rather incline one to suspect poisoning, and what is said in the *Acts* of the ambiguous behaviour of the Phœnicians and the care which they took to gain over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, would strengthen this hypothesis.

The death of Herod Agrippa I. brought the end of all independence for Jerusalem. The city began again to be administered by procurators, and this state of things lasted till the great revolt. This was a blessing to Christianity; for it is very remarkable how the religion, which was later to sustain so terrible a struggle with the Roman Empire, grew up in the shade of Roman principles and under their protection. It was Rome, as we have already remarked several times, which prevented Judaism from entirely giving itself over to its intolerant instincts and from stifling the free developments travailing in its womb. Every diminution of Jewish authority was a benefit to the nascent sect. Cuspius Fadus, the first of the new line of procurators, was another Pilate, full of firmness or, at

least, of good intentions. But Claudius continued to show favour to Jewish pretensions, more especially at the instigation of the young Herod Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa I., whom he had near his person and greatly loved. After the short administration of Cuspius Fadus, the functions of procurator were entrusted to a Jew—that Tiberius Alexander, nephew of Philo and son of the alabarch of the Alexandrian Jews, who attained to high offices and played a great part in the political affairs of the age. It is true that the Jews did not like him, and regarded him, not unreasonably, as an apostate.

To cut short these unceasingly recurrent disputes, recourse was had to an expedient conformable with sound principles. A kind of separation of the spiritual and the temporal was effected. The political power remained in the hands of the procurators; but Herod, king of Chalcis, brother of Agrippa I., was appointed prefect of the Temple, keeper of the pontifical vestments, and treasurer of the sacred funds, and invested with the right to nominate the high priests. On his death (in 48), Herod Agrippa II., son of Herod Agrippa I., succeeded his uncle in these offices, which he retained till the great war. Claudius showed a kindly interest in all this. The high Roman functionaries in Syria, though less inclined than the Emperor to concessions, also used much moderation. Ventidius Cumanus, the procurator, condescended so far as to cause to be beheaded, in the midst of Jews hedging him in, a soldier who had torn a copy of the Pentateuch. All was of no avail; Josephus is right in dating from the administration of Cumanus the disorders which only ended with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Christianity played no part in these troubles; but they were, like Christianity itself, one of the symptoms of the extraordinary fever which was consuming the Jewish people, and of the divine travail which was being accomplished within it. Never had the Jewish faith made such progress. The Temple of Jerusalem was one of the world's sanctuaries whose reputation extended farthest, and to which most offerings were sent. Judaism had become the prevailing religion of several parts of Syria. The Asmonæan princes had in these regions violently converted whole populations (Idumæans, Ituræans, etc.). There were many instances of circumcision thus imposed by force; the ardour for making proselytes was very great. The house of Herod itself powerfully assisted the Jewish propaganda. To marry princesses of that family, whose wealth was immense, princes of petty dynasties, vassals of the Romans, of Emesa, of Pontus, and of Cilicia, turned Jews. Arabia and Ethiopia also counted a large number of converts. The royal families of Mesene and Adiabene, tributaries of the Parthians, were won over, more especially in the case of the women. It was acknowledged that happiness was to be found by knowing and observing the Law. Even those who did not go the length of being circumcised modified their religion more or less in the Jewish direction; a kind of monotheism became the general religious spirit in Syria. At Damascus, a city in no respect of Jewish origin, nearly all the women had adopted the Jewish religion. Behind Pharasaic Judaism was thus formed a kind of free Judaism, of less pure alloy, unfamiliar with all the secrets of the sect, bringing nothing but its goodwill and honest heart, but having far more promise for the future. In some respects the situation was that of the Catholicism of our days, in which, on the one hand, we see narrow-minded and haughty theologians, who of themselves would win no more souls to Catholicism than the Pharisees won to Judaism; on the other, devout laymen, heretical a thousand times over without knowing it, but filled with touching zeal, rich in good works and poetic feeling, entirely occupied in concealing or patching up by benevolent interpretations the blunders of their doctors.

One of the most extraordinary instances of this inclination which drew religious souls to Judaism was that afforded by the royal family of Adiabene on the Tigris. This house, of Persian origin and habits, already partially initiated into Greek culture, became almost entirely Jewish, and that even in a spirit of high devotion; for, as we have said, such proselytes were often more pious than Jews by birth. Izates, the head of the family, embraced Judaism on the preaching of a Jewish merchant called Ananias, who, being admitted for trading purposes into the harem of Abennerig, king of Mesene, had converted all the women and made himself their spiritual teacher. The women put Izates in contact with him. About the same time his mother, Helena, had herself instructed in the true faith by another Jew. Izates, in his zeal as a new convert, wished to undergo circumcision also. But his mother and Ananias strongly advised him against it. Ananias proved to him that observing the commandments of God was more important than circumcision, and that, without the ceremony, one might still be a very good Jew. Such a tolerance was the view of a small number of enlightened minds. Some time afterwards a Galilean Jew, called Eleazar, having happened on the king reading the Pentateuch, demonstrated to him by texts that he could not observe the Law without being circumcised. Izates was convinced, and had the operation performed on the spot.

The conversion of Izates was followed by that of his brother Monobazes and of almost all his family. About the year 44 Helena came to settle at Jerusalem, where she built a palace and a family mausoleum, still extant, for the royal house of Adiabene. She endeared herself to the Jews by her friendliness and charities. It was highly edifying to see her, as a pious Jewess, frequenting the Temple, consulting the doctors, reading the Law, and teaching it to her sons. During the plague of 44 this holy lady was the city's providence. She made a great purchase of wheat in Egypt, and of dried figs in Cyprus. Izates, for his part, sent considerable sums for distribution among the poor. The wealth of Adiabene was partially spent on Jerusalem. The sons of Izates came thither to learn the usages and tongue of the Jews. The whole family was thus the resource of that populace of beggars. It had, as it were, acquired civic rights in the city; several of its members were there at the time of the siege by Titus; others figure in the Talmudic writings, where they are presented as models of piety and disinterestedness.

It is in this manner that the royal family of Adiabene belongs to the history of Christianity. Without, indeed, being Christian, as certain traditions have professed, this family presented, under different auspices, the first-fruits of the Gentiles. In embracing Judaism it obeyed the feeling which was to bring the whole pagan world over to Christianity. The true Israelites in God's sight were much rather these aliens, inspired with so deeply sincere a religious emotion, than the haughty, malignant Pharisee, for whom religion was but a pretext for hates and scorns. These good proselytes, since they were truly holy, were in no wise fanatics. They admitted that the true religion could be practised under the rule of the most diverse civil codes. They completely severed religion from politics. The distinction between the seditious sectaries who were furiously to defend Jerusalem, and the peaceful devotees, who, at the first rumour of war, were to flee to the mountains, grew more and more manifest.

It is clear, at least, that the proselyte question arose in Judaism and Christianity in the same manner. In both was felt the necessity of widening the entrance gate. For those who took this point of view, circumcision was a useless or pernicious practice; the Mosaic observances were a simple racial sign,

having validity only for the sons of Abraham. Before becoming the universal religion, Judaism had to be reduced to a kind of deism, imposing only the duties of natural religion. In this it had a sublime mission to fulfil, and a section of Judaism, in the first half of the first century, devoted itself to it in a highly intelligent fashion. In a way Judaism was one of those numberless national faiths which filled the world, and depended for their sanctity on the fact that ancestors had thus worshipped; in another way, Judaism was the absolute religion, made for all, destined to be accepted by all. The terrible eruption of fanaticism which prevailed in Judæa, and brought about the war of extermination, cut that future short. It was Christianity which, on its own account, took up the task which the synagogue had been unable to achieve. Putting aside questions of ritual, Christianity continued the monotheistic propaganda of Judaism. What gave Judaism its success with the women of Damascus, with Abennerig's harem, with Helena, with so many devout proselytes, gave Christianity its strength throughout the whole world. In this sense the glory of Christianity is in reality mingled with that of Judaism. A generation of fanatics bereft the latter of its reward, and prevented it from reaping the harvest which it had prepared.

Chapter XV.

MOVEMENTS PARALLEL WITH OR IMITATED FROM CHRISTIANITY—SIMON OF GITTON

Christianity was now really founded. In the history of religions it is only the first few years which are hard to live through. Once a belief has resisted the stern trials which assail every new foundation, its future is assured. More proficient than the other sectaries of the same age, Essenes, Baptists, partisans of Judas the Gaulonite, who never emerged from the Jewish world and perished with it, the founders of Christianity, with remarkable prescience, very soon plunged into the great world and made their place in it. The few mentions which we find of the Christians in Josephus, the Talmud, and the Greek and Latin authors, need not surprise us. Josephus has come down to us by the hands of Christian copyists, who have suppressed all repugnant to their belief. It may well be conjectured that he spoke at greater length of Jesus and the Christians than he does in the version which has reached us. In a like measure the Talmud suffered, in the Middle Ages and at the time of its first publication, many curtailments and alterations; Christian censure having severely exercised itself on the text, and a host of wretched Jews having been burnt for being found in possession of a book containing passages deemed blasphemous. It is no matter for surprise that the Greek and Latin writers took little interest in a movement which they could not understand, and which took place in a little world that was closed to them. Christianity for their eyes was lost in the murky background of Judaism; it was a family quarrel in the bosom of an abject nation; why trouble about it? The two or three passages in which

Tacitus and Suetonius speak of the Christians prove that, while usually outside the field of vision of the great public, the new sect was a phenomenon of considerable importance, since, in one or two chance allusions, we see it distinctly visible through the mist of the general inattention.

What has contributed, moreover, slightly to efface the outlines of Christianity in the history of the Jewish world in the first century of our era, is that it was not an isolated phenomenon. Philo, at the hour we have reached, had ended his career, entirely devoted to love of righteousness. The sect of Judas the Gaulonite still endured. The agitator had had his ideas carried on by his sons, James, Simon, and Menahem. James and Simon were crucified by order of the renegade procurator, Tiberius Alexander. As to Menahem, he was to play an important part in the culminating catastrophe of the nation. In 44 an enthusiast called Theudas had arisen, proclaiming approaching deliverance, bidding the multitudes to follow him to the desert, promising, like another Joshua, to make them pass, dry-shod, over Jordan; according to him this passage was the true baptism, which was to initiate each of his faithful to the kingdom of God. More than four hundred people followed him. Cuspius Fadus, the procurator, sent cavalry after him, dispersed his band, and slew him. Some years previously the whole of Samaria had been fired to excitement by the voice of a seer who claimed to have had a revelation of the spot in Gerizim, where Moses had hidden the sacred utensils of worship. Pilate had suppressed this movement with great severity. As to Jerusalem, peace was henceforth at an end for it. From the arrival of the procurator Ventidius Cumanus (48) troubles never ceased. Excitement rose to such a pitch that life grew impossible in the city; the most trivial incidents caused explosions. Everywhere a strange fermentation, a kind of mysterious disquiet, was experienced. Impostors multiplied on every hand. The frightful plague of Zealots (Kenaïm) or *Sicarii* began to appear. Miscreants, armed with daggers, glided into crowds, stabbed their victims, and were then the first to cry murder. Not a day passed without the report of some such assassination. An extraordinary reign of terror prevailed. Josephus presents the crimes of the Zealots as pure acts of wickedness; but there is no doubt that fanaticism had a part in them. It was in defence of the Law that these wretches armed themselves with the dagger. Whoever in their sight failed in one of the legal prescriptions saw his sentence pronounced and forthwith executed. In so doing they believed they did the work most meritorious and pleasing to God.

Dreams like that of Theudas were revived in every direction. Persons, pretending themselves inspired, excited the people and dragged them with them to the desert, under the pretext of revealing by manifest signs that God was about to deliver them. The Roman authorities exterminated the dupes of such agitators by thousands. An Egyptian Jew, who came to Jerusalem about the year 56, had the art to draw after him by his magic feats thirty thousand persons, including four thousand *Sicarii*. From the desert he wished to lead them to the Mount of Olives, whence, he said, they were to see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his word alone. Felix, who was then procurator, marched against him and dispersed his company. The Egyptian escaped and never appeared again. But, as in an unhealthy body ills succeed one another, various bands composed of sorcerers and thieves were soon to be seen, which openly incited the people to revolt against the Romans, threatening with death those who continued to obey them. On this pretext, they slew the rich, looted their goods, burnt villages, and filled all Judæa with traces of their fury. A frightful war loomed ahead. A spirit of dizziness reigned everywhere, and kept men's

imaginations in a state bordering on madness.

It is not impossible that there may have been in Theudas a certain underlying idea of imitating Jesus and John the Baptist. Such imitation is obvious, at least, in Simon of Gitton, if Christian traditions on that individual merit any faith. We have already encountered him in contact with the Apostles on the occasion of Philip's first mission to Samaria. It was in the reign of Claudius that he achieved celebrity. His miracles passed for being unquestionable, and everybody at Samaria looked upon him as a supernatural being.

At the same time, his miracles were not the one basis of his reputation. He apparently combined with them a doctrine on which it is difficult for us to judge; the work entitled *The Great Announcement*, which is ascribed to him, and has come down to us in extracts, being probably but a very modified statement of his ideas. Simon, during his stay at Alexandria, seems, in his studies of Greek philosophy, to have imbibed a system of syncretic theosophy and allegorical exegesis analogous to that of Philo. This system has its grandeur. Now it recalls the Jewish Kabala, now the pantheistic theories of the Indian philosophy; regarded from certain points of view, it would seem impressed with Buddhism and Parsiism. At the head of all things is "He who is, who has been, and who shall be"—that is to say, the Samaritan *Jahveh*, understood, according to the etymological sense of his name, as the one eternal Being, self-generating, self-augmenting, seeking himself, finding himself, father, mother, sister, spouse, son of himself. In the midst of this infinite being all exists potentially for eternity; all is transformed to action and reality by man's consciousness, by reason, language, and knowledge. The world is thus explained either by a hierarchy of abstract principles, similar to the Æons of Gnosticism and the sephirotic tree of the Kabala, or by a system of angels which seems borrowed from the beliefs of Persia. These abstractions are sometimes presented as renderings of physical and physiological facts. At other times the "divine powers," considered as separate substances, are realised in successive incarnations, either female or male, whose goal is the deliverance of creatures entangled in the bonds of matter. The first of these "powers" is that which is essentially called "the Great," and which is the intellect of this world, the universal Providence. It is male. Simon was reputed its incarnation. Beside it is its female syzygy, "Great Thought." Accustomed to clothe his theories in a strange symbolism and to imagine allegorical interpretations for the ancient texts, sacred and profane, Simon, or the author of *The Great Announcement*, gave this divine virtue the name of "Helena," signifying thereby that she was the object of universal pursuit, the eternal cause for strife among men, she who avenges herself on her foes by blinding them, until the moment they consent to sing the recántation; a grotesque conception which, ill-understood or purposely travestied, gave rise among the Fathers of the Church to the most puerile stories. The acquaintance with Greek literature possessed by the author of *The Great Announcement* is, in any case, remarkable. He maintained that, when one knew how to interpret them, the writings of the pagans sufficed for the knowledge of all things. His wide eclecticism embraced all revelations, and sought to blend them in a single order of truths.

As to the essence of his system, it has much analogy to that of Valentinus and to the doctrines about the divine persons to be found in the fourth Gospel, in Philo, and in the Targums. That *Metathronos*, which the Jews placed beside the Divinity, and almost in his bosom, much resembles the "Great Power." In Samaritan theology figure a Great Angel, the chief of the others, and manifestations or "divine virtues" analogous to those which the Jewish

Kabala imagined on its own account. It seems clear, then, that Simon of Gitton was a kind of theosophist, of the order of Philo and the Kabalists. Perhaps he momentarily approximated to Christianity; but assuredly he never definitely embraced it.

It is very difficult to decide whether he really borrowed something from the disciples of Jesus. If *The Great Announcement* be in any degree his, it must be admitted that on several points he anticipated Christian ideas, and on others adopted them with much breadth. It appears that he essayed an eclecticism similar to that practised later by Mohammed, and attempted to found his religious rôle on the previously necessary acceptance of the divine mission of John and of Jesus. He wished to be in mystic communion with them. He asserted, it was said, that it was he, Simon, who had appeared to the Samaritans as the Father, to the Jews by the visible crucifixion of the Son, and to the Gentiles by the infusion of the Holy Spirit. He also prepared the way, apparently, for the doctrine of the Docetists. He said that it was he who had suffered in Judæa in the person of Jesus, but that the suffering had been only apparent. His pretensions to be the Divinity itself and receive adoration were probably exaggerated by the Christians, who only sought to render him odious.

For the rest, it is clear that the doctrine of *The Great Announcement* is that of nearly all the Gnostic writings; if Simon really professed these doctrines, the Fathers of the Church were fully justified in making him the founder of Gnosticism. We believe that *The Great Announcement* has a merely relative authenticity; that it is, or is not far short of being, to the doctrine of Simon what the fourth Gospel is to the thought of Jesus; that it goes back to the earliest years of the second century—that is to say, to the epoch when the theosophical ideas of the *Logos* were definitely taking the upper hand. These ideas, which we shall find in germ in the Christian Church about the year 60, may, however, have been known to Simon, whose life, we may be permitted to suppose, was prolonged to the end of the century.

The conception which we form of this enigmatical person is, then, that of a kind of plagiarist of Christianity. Mimicry seems a constant habit among the Samaritans. Just as they had always imitated the Judaism of Jerusalem, those sectaries also had their copy of Christianity, their gnosis, their theosophical speculations, their Kabala. But was Simon a respectable copyist, to whom only success was lacking, or an immoral and frivolous conjurer, exploiting for the benefit of his reputation a doctrine of shreds and patches picked up here and there? That is what we shall probably never know. Simon thus retains the falsest of positions before the historian; he walked on a tight rope where no hesitation was permissible; in that order of circumstances there is no middle way between a ridiculous downfall and the most marvellous success.

We shall have again to return to Simon, and inquire if the legends of his stay at Rome have any reality. What is certain is that the Simonian sect lasted until the third century; that it had Churches so far away as Antioch, possibly even at Rome; that Menander of Capparetæa and Cleobius carried on the doctrine of Simon, or rather imitated his character of theurgist, with a reminiscence more or less present of Jesus and his Apostles. Simon and his disciples were held in high esteem among their co-religionists. Sects of the same species, parallel with Christianity and more or less tinged with Gnosticism, did not cease to spring up among the Samaritans till their quasi-destruction by Justinian. The fate of that little religion was to get the reaction of all that went on around it, without producing anything quite original.

As to the Christians, the memory of Simon of Gitta was held among them in abomination. His magic feats, so

much resembling their own, irritated them. To have counterbalanced the success of the Apostles was the most unpardonable of crimes. It was alleged that the marvels of Simon and his disciples were the work of the Devil, and the Samaritan theosophist was branded with the name of "magician," which his followers took in very bad part. The whole Christian legend of Simon was stamped with concentrated wrath. To him were ascribed the maxims of quietism and the excesses usually supposed to be its consequence. He was deemed the father of all error, the chief of the heresiarchs. Delight was found in relating his laughable misadventures, his defeats at the hands of the Apostle Peter. The impulse that led him towards Christianity was attributed to the vilest motive. His name was so much in people's minds that they carelessly fancied they read it in inscriptions where it was not written. The symbolism with which he had clad his ideas was interpreted in the most grotesque fashion. The "Helena," whom he identified with "the first intelligence," became a prostitute whom he had purchased at the mart at Tyre. His name, finally, loathed almost as much as that of Judas and taken as synonymous with *anti-apostle*, became the worst insult that could be used to a man, and, so to speak, a proverbial word to signify a professional impostor, an enemy of truth whom it was wished to indicate darkly. He was Christianity's first foe, or rather the first person whom Christianity treated as such. No more need be said save that neither pious frauds nor calumnies were spared for his defamation. Criticism in such a case cannot attempt a rehabilitation, documents on the other side being lacking. All that it can do is to point out the aspect of the traditions, and the deliberate disparagement to be noticed therein.

It must at least abstain from burdening the memory of the Samaritan theurgist with what may be only a fortuitous coincidence. In one of the narrations of the historian Josephus, a Jewish magician called Simon, a native of Cyprus, plays the part of pandar to the procurator Felix. The circumstances of this story do not sufficiently fit Simon of Gitton to permit his being made responsible for the deeds of a person who can have had nothing in common with him, save a name borne then by thousands of men and a pretension to supernatural feats, which a host of his contemporaries unfortunately shared.

Chapter XVI.

GENERAL PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

We have seen Barnabas set out from Antioch to hand over to the faithful at Jerusalem the collection raised by their Syrian brethren. We have seen him a witness of some of the emotions which the persecution of Herod Agrippa II. evoked in the Church of Jerusalem. Let us return with him to Antioch, in which all the creative energy of the sect seems at the moment concentrated.

Barnabas took with him a zealous colleague. This was his cousin, John Mark, the familiar disciple of Peter, the son of that Mary with whom the first of

the Apostles loved to dwell. No doubt, in bringing with him this new fellow-worker, Barnabas was already thinking of the great enterprise with which he was going to associate him. It may even be that he foresaw the divisions which that enterprise would arouse, and was well pleased to connect with it a man known to be the right hand of Peter—of the Apostle, that is, who had, in general affairs, most authority.

The enterprise was nothing short of a series of great missions which were to start from Antioch, and had as their avowed object the conversion of the whole world. Like all the great resolutions that were taken in the Church, this was attributed to an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was believed that a special calling, a supernatural choice, had been vouchsafed to the Church of Antioch while it fasted and prayed. Perhaps one of the prophets of the Church, Manaen or Lucius, uttered in one of his fits of glossolalia words which were taken to mean that Paul and Barnabas were predestined to this mission. As to Paul, he was convinced that God had chosen him from his mother's womb for the task, to which he was thenceforth to devote himself heart and soul.

The two Apostles took to themselves, as a lieutenant to second them in the material cares of their undertaking, that John Mark whom Barnabas had brought with him from Jerusalem. When the preparations were at an end there were fasts and prayers; hands, it is said, were laid on the two Apostles to betoken a mission conferred by the Church itself; they were commended to the grace of God, and they took their departure. In which direction were they to turn their steps? What world were they to evangelise? It is this that we have now to investigate.

All the great missions of primitive Christianity took a westerly direction, or, in other words, adopted as their scene and scope the Roman Empire. If certain small tracts of territory, lying between the Euphrates and Tigris, and in vassalage to the Arsacidæ, be excepted, the Empire of the Parthians received no Christian missions in the first century. The Tigris was on the east a limit which Christianity only passed under the Sassanidæ. Two great causes, the Mediterranean and the Roman Empire, decided this important circumstance.

For a thousand years the Mediterranean had been the great highway where all civilisations, all ideas, had passed each other by. The Romans, having freed it from piracy, had made it an unequalled route for traffic. A numerous coasting shipping facilitated travel along the shores of the great lake. The comparative safety afforded by the imperial roads, the securities to be obtained from the public authorities, the diffusion of Jews over the whole Mediterranean littoral, the use of the Greek language in the eastern portion of that sea, the unity of civilisation created first by the Greeks, then by the Romans, made the map of the Empire the map of the countries marked out for Christian missions and destined to become Christian. The Roman *orbis* came to be the Christian *orbis*, and in that sense it can be said that the founders of the Empire were the founders of the Christian monarchy, or, at least, that they traced its boundaries. Every province conquered by the Roman Empire was a province conquered for Christianity. Imagine the Apostles confronting an Asia Minor, a Greece, an Italy, divided into a hundred little republics; a Gaul, a Spain, an Africa, an Egypt in possession of old national institutions: you can no longer conceive of their success, or even the possibility of their project being born. The unity of the Empire was the necessary condition of all great religious proselytism, surmounting nationalities. The Empire felt it keenly in the fourth century; it became Christian; it recognised that Christianity was the religion which it had unconsciously begotten, the religion bounded by its frontiers, identified with it, capable of procuring it a

second life. The Church for its part took on an entirely Roman character, and has survived to our own days as a remnant of the Empire. Had Paul been told that Claudius was his first colleague; had Claudius been told that the Jew setting forth from Antioch was to found the most enduring part of the imperial edifice, they would both of them have been much amazed. None the less, they would have been told true.

Of all lands foreign to Judæa, the first in which Christianity settled was naturally Syria. The vicinity of Palestine and the great number of Jews resident in the country made such a state of things inevitable. Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy were subsequently visited by the apostolic missionaries some years later. Southern Gaul, Spain, and the African coast, although they may have been evangelised at a fairly early date, can be considered as forming a more recent stratum in the foundations of Christianity.

The same can be said of Egypt. Egypt plays scarcely any part in the apostolic history; the Christian missionaries seem to have systematically turned their backs upon it. That country, which, from the third century onwards, became the theatre of such important events in the history of religion, was, at the outset, much behindhand with Christianity. Apollos was the only Christian doctor who came from the school of Alexandria, and it was during his travels that he acquired Christianity. The cause of this singular phenomenon must be sought in the slight intercourse existing between the Jews of Egypt and those of Palestine, and more especially in the fact that Jewish Egypt had, in a sense, its own separate religious development. Egypt had Philo and the Therapeutæ; that was its Christianity, which dispensed it and disinclined it from lending an attentive ear to any other. As for pagan Egypt, it possessed religious institutions much more persistent than those of Græco-Roman paganism; the Egyptian religion still flourished in all its vigour; it was almost the moment when those huge temples of Esneh and Ombos were being built, when the hope of having in little Cæsarion a last King Ptolemy, a national Messiah, raised from the ground those sanctuaries of Denderah and Hermonthis which stand comparison with the finest works of the Pharaohs. Christianity everywhere took its seat upon the ruins of national feeling and local worships. The spiritual degradation of Egypt, moreover, made the aspirations, which everywhere provided such easy openings for Christianity, of rare occurrence there.

A rapid flash, proceeding from Syria, lighting up almost instantaneously the three great peninsulas of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, and soon followed by a second reflected flash which embraced almost all the Mediterranean coasts: such was the first manifestation of Christianity. The course of the apostolic ships was always practically the same. Christian preaching seemed to follow a former track, which was none other than that of Jewish emigration. Like a contagion which, starting from the depths of the Mediterranean, suddenly makes its appearance at certain points of the littoral by some secret correlation, Christianity had its ports of arrival in some measure marked out in advance. These ports were nearly all characterised by Jewish colonies. As a rule, a synagogue preceded the establishment of the Church. One might compare the state of things to a train of gunpowder, or, better still, to a sort of electric cable, along which the new idea flew in almost instantaneous fashion.

For the past hundred and fifty years, in fact, Judaism, till then confined to the East and Egypt, had taken flight to the West. Cyrene, Cyprus, Asia Minor, certain cities of Macedonia and Greece, and Italy had important Jewish settlements. The Jews afforded the first example of that order of patriotism which the Parsis, the Armenians, and,

up to a certain point, the modern Greeks were to show later; a patriotism of extreme energy though unattached to any particular soil; a patriotism of merchants spread about everywhere, and everywhere regarding each other as brethren; a patriotism leading, not to the formation of great compact States, but of little self-governing communities in the midst of other States. Firmly bound up one with another, those Jews of the dispersion constituted well-nigh independent commonwealths in the cities, with their own magistrates and councils. In certain cities they had an ethnarch or alabarch, invested with almost sovereign rights. They dwelt in quarters of their own, which were exempt from the common law and much despised by the rest of the world, but in which happiness prevailed. Poverty was more common than wealth. The age of great Jewish fortunes had not yet come; they began in Spain under the Visigoths. The appropriation of finance by the Jews was the result of the administrative incapacity of the barbarians, of the hatred conceived by the Church for monetary science, and of its superficial ideas on lending at interest. There was nothing like that under the Roman Empire. Now, when the Jew is not rich, he is poor; middle-class comfort is not in his line. At any rate, he can endure poverty very well. What he can do still better is to ally the most exalted religious devotion with the rarest commercial ability. Theological eccentricities in no way exclude sound common sense in commerce. In England, America, and Russia the most grotesque sectaries (Irvingites, Latter-Day Saints, Raskolniks) are very good men of business.

The great characteristic of piously practised Jewish life has always been the creation of much cheerfulness and cordiality. There was mutual affection in that little world; they loved a past therein, and the same past; the religious rites very sweetly encompassed life. It was something analogous to those distinctly marked communities which still exist in every great Turkish city; for example, the Greek, Syrian, and Jewish communities of Smyrna, close brotherhoods, in which all know each other, live together, scheme together. In those little republics religious questions always predominate over political questions, or rather supply the lack of the latter. In them a heresy is an affair of State; a schism has always some personal motive at bottom. The Romans, with rare exceptions, never entered the reserved quarters. The synagogues promulgated decrees, awarded honours, played the part of actual municipalities. The influence of the corporations was very great. At Alexandria it was of the highest order, and dominated the whole internal history of the city. At Rome the Jews were numerous, and formed a body of support that was not to be despised. Cicero represents it as an act of courage to have dared to resist them. Cæsar showed them favour, and found them faithful. To keep them in check Tiberius was led to have recourse to the severest measures. Caligula, whose reign was so inauspicious for them in the East, allowed them freedom of association at Rome. Claudius, who favoured them in Judæa, found it necessary to expel them from the city. They were encountered everywhere, and of them, as of the Greeks, it was said that, vanquished, they had imposed laws on their masters.

The attitude of the native populations to these aliens greatly varied. On the one hand, the feeling of repulsion and antipathy which the Jews, by their spirit of jealous isolation, their malevolent disposition, their unsocial habits, have created around them wherever they have been strong in numbers and organisation, was forcibly displayed. When free they were in reality privileged; for they enjoyed the benefits of society without bearing its burdens. Charlatans turned to their own profit the curiosity excited by the Jewish worship, and, under pretext of revealing its secrets, indulged in all sorts of impostures. Violent,

half-burlesque pamphlets, like that of Apion, pamphlets from which the profane authors too often imbibed their information, were in circulation, and served to nourish the wrath of the pagan public. The Jews seem to have been usually vexatious and inclined to grumble. They were regarded as a secret society, hostile to the rest of the world, the members of which at all costs pushed their own interests to the detriment of others. Their quaint customs, their aversion from certain foods, their filth, their lack of distinction, the evil smell they gave forth, their religious scruples, their niceties in observance of the Sabbath, were all held ridiculous. Banned by society, the Jews, as a natural result, had no anxiety to pose as gentlefolk. They were everywhere to be met on their travels with garments glossy with dirt, an uncouth bearing, a look of weariness, a sallow complexion, large unhealthy-looking eyes, and a sanctimonious expression; forming a body apart with their wives, their children, their bundles of bedding, the hamper that constituted their whole equipment. In the towns they practised the most petty trades; they were beggars, ragpickers, dealers in old clothes, matchsellers. Their law and their history were unjustly slighted. Now they were considered cruel and superstitious; now atheists and scoffers at the gods. Their aversion from images seemed pure impiety. Circumcision, above all, supplied a theme for endless mockeries.

But such superficial judgments were not universal. The Jews had as many friends as defamers. Their seriousness, their good behaviour, the simplicity of their worship, had charms for a host of people. A certain element of superiority was recognised in them. A vast monotheistic and Mosaic propaganda was organised; a kind of mighty whirlwind sprang up about the peculiar little people. The poor Jewish pedlar of the Trastevere, going forth in the morning with his basket of small wares, often returned in the evening rich with alms bestowed by some pious hand. Women especially were drawn to these ragged missionaries. Juvenal includes leaning to the Jewish religion among the vices with which he reproaches the ladies of his time. Those who were converted vaunted the treasure they had found and the happiness they enjoyed. The old Hellenic and Roman spirit made an active resistance; hate and contempt of the Jews characterise all cultivated minds—Cicero, Horace, Seneca, Juvenal, Tacitus, Quintilian, and Suetonius. On the other hand, the enormous mass of mixed populations which the Empire had brought under submission, populations to which the ancient Roman spirit and the Hellenic wisdom were alien or indifferent, flocked in numbers to a society in which they found touching examples of concord, charity, mutual aid, class attachment, love of work, and proud poverty. Mendicity, which was later an entirely Christian institution, was thenceforth a Jewish institution. The professional beggar, "trained by his mother," offered himself to the conception of the poets of the time as a Jew.

Exemption from certain civil burdens, in particular from military service, might also contribute to cause the lot of the Jews to be regarded as enviable. The State in those days demanded many sacrifices and gave few moral joys. A glacial cold prevailed as in a monotonous and shelterless plain. Life so mournful in paganism regained its charm and value in the warm atmosphere of synagogue and church. It was not freedom that was to be found there. The brethren were much given to mutual spying, and were incessantly meddling with one another. Yet, although the internal life of those little communities was stormy, they provided infinite delight; no one deserted them, there was no apostate. There the poor man was content, and looked unenvying upon wealth with the tranquillity of a good conscience. There the truly democratic feeling of the folly of worldliness, the vanity of riches and profane splendours,

found shrewd expression. The pagan world was little understood, and was judged with extreme severity; they saw in Roman civilisation a mass of impurities and loathsome vices, in much the same manner as a worthy working man of our own day, imbued with Socialistic declamation, pictures "aristocrats" to himself in the blackest colours. But there were in the communities life, cheerfulness, and interest, as there are to-day in the poorest synagogues of the Polish and Galician Jews. The lack of elegance and refinement in habits was compensated by an inestimable spirit of family devotion and patriarchal good feeling. In the society of the world at large, on the contrary, egoism and spiritual isolation had borne their last fruits.

Zechariah's words were coming true: the world was taking the Jews by the hem of the garment and saying to them: "Lead us to Jerusalem." There was no great city where the Sabbath, the fasts, and the other rites of Judaism went unobserved. Josephus dares to challenge those who doubt it to cast a glance on their own country, or even their own house, to see if there they do not find confirmation of what he says. The presence at Rome and near the Emperor's person of several members of the family of the Herods, who ostentatiously practised their worship in all men's sight, much contributed to this publicity. The Sabbath, moreover, by a kind of necessity prevailed in the quarters where there were Jews. Their positive determination not to open their shops on that day compelled their neighbours to modify their habits in consequence. It is thus that at Salonica the Sabbath can be said to be still observed to our own time, the Jewish population being sufficiently wealthy and numerous to lay down the law and regulate the day of rest by the closing of its places of business.

Almost on the level of the Jew, often in his company, the Syrian was an active instrument in the conquest of the West by the East. They were sometimes confused with one another, and Cicero believed he had found the common quality which united them by calling them "nations born for servitude." That was what assured them the future; for the future was then to the slaves. A not less essential trait of the Syrian was his fluency, his adaptability, the superficial lucidity of his intellect. The Syrian temperament is like a passing image in the clouds of the sky. At moments certain gracefully drawn lines are to be noticed, but these never achieve a complete design. In the shade, or in the uncertain light of a lamp, the Syrian woman, under her veils, with her dreamy eyes and infinite langours, creates a momentary illusion. But when we come to analyse this beauty, it disappears; it does not bear examination. For that matter it barely lasts three or four years. What is charming in the Syrian race is the child of five or six; in contrast to Greece in which the child was of small account, the young man inferior to the man in his prime, the man in his prime inferior to the old man. The Syrian intelligence engages by its air of swiftness and lightness; but it lacks fixity and substance, almost like that "golden wine" of Lebanon which affords an agreeable zest, but of which one quickly tires. God's true gifts have an element at once subtle and strong, intoxicating and lasting. Greece is better appreciated to-day than it has ever been before, and shall be so more and more, eternally.

Many Syrian emigrants, whom the desire to make a fortune drew to the West, were more or less attached to Judaism. Those who were not, remained faithful to their village worship—that is to say, to the memory of some temple dedicated to a local "Jupiter," who was usually only the supreme God distinguished by some special title. It was essentially a species of monotheism that those Syrians imported under the guise of their alien gods. Compared with the profoundly marked divine personalities presented by Greek and Roman polytheism, the gods in question, for the most part synonyms of the Sun, were

almost brothers of the one god. Like long and enervating recitatives, the Syrian worships might well seem less barren than the Latin worship, less empty than the Greek. The Syrian women imbibed therefrom a certain ecstatic voluptuousness. These women were at all times strange beings, a bone of contention between the demon and God, hovering between the saint and the madwoman. The woman saint of serious virtues, of heroic renunciations, of faithfully-kept resolves, belongs to other races and other climates; the saint of potent imaginations, of absolute raptures, of loves at first sight, is the saint of Syria. The possessed woman of our Middle Ages is the slave of Satan by vileness or sin; the possessed woman of Syria is one whom the ideal has crazed, a woman whose feelings have been bruised, who avenges herself by frenzy or takes refuge in dumbness, who only needs a gentle word or kindly glance to be healed. Transferred to the Western world, the Syrian women acquired influence, sometimes by woman's evil arts, more often by a certain moral superiority and a real capacity. This was especially evident 150 years later, when the most important persons at Rome married Syrian wives, who immediately assumed a great ascendancy on political affairs. The Mussulman woman of our own time, a scolding shrew, stupidly fanatical, scarce living but to do mischief, almost incapable of virtue, must not make us forget such women as Julia Domna, Julia Mæsa, Julia Mamæa, and Julia Soæmias, who at Rome manifested in religious matters a tolerance and an instinct for mysticism up till then unknown. What is very remarkable also is that the Syrian dynasty thus introduced showed favour to Christianity, and that Mamæa, and, later, the Emperor Philip the Arabian passed for being Christians. Christianity in the third and fourth centuries was essentially the religion of Syria. After Palestine, Syria had the greatest share in its establishment.

It was more especially at Rome that the Syrian in the first century exercised his intrusive activity. Entrusted with all sorts of petty employments, jobbing footman, porter, litter-carrier, the *Syrus* entered everywhere, introducing with him the tongue and the usages of his own land. He had neither the pride nor the philosophic elevation of Europeans, still less their vigour; weak in build, pale, often feverish, incapable of taking his meals or sleeping at regular hours like our heavy and substantial races, hardly touching meat, living on onions and gourds, sleeping little and lightly, the Syrian died young and was chronically ailing. What were peculiarly his were humility, gentleness, courtesy, and a certain good-heartedness; there was no mental solidity, but much charm; little common sense, except, perhaps, in matters of business, but an amazing ardour and a quite feminine fascination. The Syrian, having never had a political life, has a peculiar aptitude for religious movements. The poor Maronite, half-woman, humble and tattered, performed the greatest of revolutions. His ancestor, the *Syrus* of Rome, was the most zealous herald of the good tidings to all the afflicted. Every year brought into Greece, Italy, and Gaul colonies of Syrians, impelled by their natural taste for petty trading. They were recognised on the ships by their large family, the troops of pretty children, nearly all of an age, which followed them, the mother with the girlish air of a child of fourteen, submissive, keeping close by her husband's side and smiling gently, scarce taller than her elder sons. The heads that form this peaceful group are of small significance; assuredly there is here no Archimedes or Plato or Phidias. But this Syrian trader, when he has reached Rome, will be a good and merciful man, charitable to his fellow-countrymen, loving the poor. He will talk with the slaves, and reveal to them a refuge where the poor wretches, ground down by Roman harshness to the most distressing solitude, will find some little

solace. The Greek and Latin races—races of masters, made for great things—knew not how to profit from a humble position. The Greek or Roman slave passed his life in revolt and desire to do evil. The typical slave of antiquity has all vices: he is a glutton, a liar, a scoundrel, the natural foe of his master. By these means he proved in a manner his birthright; he protested against an unnatural state of things. The worthy Syrian, for his part, made no protest; he accepted his degradation and sought to make the most of it. He conciliated the kindness of his master, dared to speak to him, knew the art of pleasing his mistress. So this great agent of democracy went about unknotting, mesh by mesh, the net of ancient civilisation. The old societies, based on disdain, racial inequality, and military prowess, were lost. Weakness and servility were now to become an advantage, the perfection of virtue. Roman dignity, Greek wisdom, were still to continue the struggle for another three centuries. Tacitus was to approve the banishment of thousands of those poor wretches; *si interissent, vile damnum!* The Roman aristocracy was to fume, to deem it wrong that that riff-raff should have its gods, its institutions. But victory was decreed in advance. The Syrian, the poor man who loved his like, who shared with them, who joined with them in friendship, was to win the day. For lack of pity the Roman aristocracy was to perish.

To understand the revolution which was in process of accomplishment, we must take account of the political, social, moral, intellectual, and religious state of the countries where Jewish proselytism had thus ploughed furrows which Christian preaching was to fertilise. That study will clearly demonstrate, I hope, that the conversion of the world to Jewish and Christian ideas was inevitable, and will leave room for surprise on but one point, why that conversion was effected so slowly and so late.

Chapter XVII.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE FIRST CENTURY

The political condition of the world was most distressing. All authority was centred at Rome and in the legions. There the most shameful and degrading scenes took place. The Roman aristocracy which had conquered the world, and which, on the whole, remained in sole charge of the business of government under the Cæsars, was giving itself over to the most frenzied saturnalia of crimes which the world remembers. Cæsar and Augustus, in establishing the imperial dignity, had rightly judged the necessities of their time. The world was so low, so far as politics were concerned, that no other government was possible. Since Rome had conquered provinces without number, the ancient constitution, founded on the privilege of the patrician families, a class of stubborn and malignant "Tories," could not go on. But Augustus had failed in all duties of the true politician by leaving the future to chance. Without regular heredity, without settled rules of adoption, without a law of election, without constitutional limits, Cæsarism was like a colossal weight upon the deck of an unballasted

ship. The most terrible shocks were inevitable. Thrice in one century, under Caligula, under Nero, and under Domitian, the greatest power that has ever been fell into the hands of execrable or reckless men. Thence, horrors which were scarce outdone by the monsters of the Mongol dynasties. In that fatal line of sovereigns we are reduced almost to excusing a Tiberius, who was only completely wicked towards the close of his life, and a Claudius who was merely eccentric, clumsy, and surrounded by evil advisers. Rome become a school of immorality and savagery. It must be added that the evil came more especially from the East, from those low-class flatterers, those scoundrels whom Egypt and Syria sent to Rome, where, profiting by the oppression of the true Romans, they felt themselves all-powerful with the miscreants who governed. The Empire's most disgusting depths of ignominy, such as the apotheosis of the Emperor, his deification in his lifetime, were due to the East, above all to Egypt, then one of the most corrupt countries in the universe.

The true Roman spirit, indeed, still survived. Human nobleness was far from being extinct. A great tradition of pride and virtue lingered on in some families which came into power with Nerva, which made the glory of the age of the Antonines, and of which Tacitus was the eloquent interpreter. A time when minds so profoundly righteous as Quintilian, Pliny the younger, and Tacitus are in training, is not a time of which to despair. The dissoluteness on the surface did not reach the great depth of worth and seriousness in good Roman society; certain families still afforded models of order, devotion to duty, concord, and solid virtue. In noble houses there were admirable wives, admirable sisters. Was ever destiny more touching than that of the young and chaste Octavia, daughter of Claudius and wife of Nero, who remained pure through all infamies, and was slain at the age of twenty-two, without ever having known any joy? Women qualified in the inscriptions with *castissimæ*, *univiræ* are by no means rare. Wives went into exile with their husbands; others shared their noble death. The old Roman simplicity was not lost; the education of the children was serious and careful. The most aristocratic women worked in wool with their own hands; the cares of dress were almost unknown in good families.

The excellent statesmen who, under Trajan, sprang from the earth, so to speak, were not made on the spot. They had done service under preceding reigns; only they had had little influence, cast in the shade as they were by the lowest freedmen and favourites of the Emperor. Men of the greatest worth thus held high office under Nero. The machinery of government was good; the accession to power of the bad Emperors, disastrous as it was, was not enough to alter the general progress of affairs and the principles of the State. The Empire, far from being in decay, was in all the vigour of its most robust youth. Decay was to set in for it, but two hundred years later, and, strange to say, under much less wicked sovereigns. Merely from a political point of view the situation resembled that of France, which, having lacked since the Revolution a continuously observed policy in the succession of different powers, can pass through the most perilous crises without its internal organisation and national strength suffering over-much. In the matter of morals, the time of which we speak can be compared to the eighteenth century, an epoch which would be considered as entirely corrupt were it judged by its memoirs, manuscript literature, and collections of contemporary anecdotes, and in which, nevertheless, certain households maintained so high an austerity of manners.

Philosophy had allied itself with the honourable Roman families and made a noble resistance. The Stoic school produced the great personalities of Cremutius Cordus, Thrasea, Arrian, Helvidius

Priscus, Annæus Cornutus, and Musonius Rufus, all admirable masters of aristocratic virtue. The rigour and exaggerations of this school were due to the horrible cruelty of the government of the Cæsars. The constant thought of the righteous man was to harden himself to punishments and prepare for death. Lucan in bad taste, Persius with a higher talent, expressed the loftiest feelings of a great soul. Seneca the Philosopher, Pliny the elder, and Papirius Fabianus maintained an exalted tradition in science and philosophy. All did not bend the knee; there were sages. But too often they had no other resource than death. The ignoble portions of humanity at times assumed the upper hand. The spirit of dizziness and ferocity overflowed then and made Rome an actual hell.

The government, so terribly uneven at Rome, was much better in the provinces. There the convulsions which shook the capital were scarcely known. Despite its defects, the Roman administration was worth more than the monarchies and republics which conquest had suppressed. The time of sovereign municipalities had for centuries passed away. Those little States were self-destroyed by their egoism, their jealous spirit, their ignorance or disregard of private liberties. The ancient Greek life, all competitive, all external, no longer satisfied any one. In its day it had had its charm; but that brilliant Olympus of a democracy of demi-gods, having lost its freshness, had grown to be something barren, cold, insignificant, vain, and superficial, for lack of goodness and solid worth. That was what legitimised the Macedonian conquest and then the Roman administration. As yet the Empire knew not the excesses of centralisation. Up to the time of Diocletian it left the provinces and cities much liberty. Almost independent kingdoms subsisted in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Armenia Minor, and Thrace under Roman protection. Those kingdoms only became dangers from the reign of Caligula onwards, because in dealing with them the rules of great and profound policy, which Augustus had laid down, were neglected. The free cities, and they were numerous, governed themselves according to their own laws; they had the legislative power and all the magistracies of an autonomous State; until the third century the municipal decrees begin with the formula: "The senate and the people....." The theatres served not only for scenic amusements; everywhere they were centres of public opinion and movement. The majority of the towns were, by different tenures, little republics. The municipal spirit was very strong; the only right they had lost was that of declaring war, a fatal right which had made the world a field of carnage. "The bounties of the Roman people to the human race" were the theme of orations which were sometimes adulatory, but to which it would be unjust to deny all sincerity. The worship of the "Roman peace," the idea of a great democracy, organised under the tutelage of Rome, was at the bottom of all men's thoughts. A Greek rhetorician made a vast display of erudition to prove that the glory of Rome must be treasured by all branches of the Hellenic race as a kind of common patrimony. So far as Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt were concerned, it may be said that there the Roman conquest destroyed no liberty. Those countries had for long been dead to political life, or had never possessed it.

In short, despite the exactions of governors and the deeds of violence inseparable from an absolute government, the world, in several respects, had up till now not been so happy. An administration directed from a distant centre was so great an advantage that even the rapine practised by the prætors of the latter days of the Republic had not succeeded in rendering it hateful. The *Lex Julia*, moreover, had greatly limited the field of abuses and extortions. The Emperor's follies and cruelties, except under Nero, only infected

the Roman aristocracy and the immediate followers of the prince. Never had the man, who had no wish to meddle in politics, lived more at his ease. The republics of antiquity, where everyone had to mix in party dissensions, were very uncomfortable places of abode. There was constant disorder and outlawry. Now the times seemed made expressly for wide-reaching proselytisms, far above the squabbles of little towns and the rivalries of dynasties. Outrages on liberty proceeded much more from what independence still remained to the provinces or communities than from the Roman administration. In the course of this history we have had, and shall have again, many occasions for remarking on this.

In those of the subjected countries in which political needs had not existed for centuries, and in which the inhabitants were only deprived of the right of tearing each other in pieces by incessant wars, the Empire was an era of prosperity and comfort such as had never been known; one might even add, without paradox, of liberty. On the one hand, freedom of trade and industry, of which the Greek republics had no idea, became possible. On the other hand, liberty of thought only gained by the new order of things. That liberty always finds it better to have dealings with a king or a prince than with jealous and narrow-minded members of the middle-class. The ancient republics did not have it. Without it the Greeks did great things, thanks to the incomparable power of their genius; but we must not forget that Athens had what was nothing short of an inquisition. The inquisitor was the King Archon; the holy office was the royal portico where accusations of "impiety" were adjudicated. Accusations of this nature were very numerous; they are the kind of causes most frequently found in the Attic orators. Not only philosophical offences, such as the denial of God or Providence, but the slightest attacks upon the civic rites, the preaching of alien religions, the most puerile infractions of the scrupulous rules of the mysteries, were crimes entailing death. The gods whom Aristophanes scoffed at on the stage sometimes slew. They slew Socrates; they all but slew Alcibiades. Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Theodorus the Atheist, Diagorus of Melos, Prodicus of Cos, Stilpo, Aristotle, Theophrastes, Aspasia, and Euripides were, more or less, in serious peril of their lives. Freedom of thought was, in short, the fruit of the monarchies which resulted from the Macedonian conquest. It was the Attali, the Ptolemies, who first gave thinkers the facilities which none of the ancient republics had afforded them. The Roman Empire carried on the same tradition. Under the Empire there was more than one arbitrary act against the philosophers; but it was invariably due to their interference in politics. A statute against freedom of thought would vainly be sought in the collection of Roman laws previous to Constantine, a prosecution for abstract thought in the history of the Emperors. Not a man of science was troubled. Men whom the Middle Ages would have burnt, such as Galen, Lucian, and Plotinus, lived in peace, protected by the law. The Empire inaugurated a period of liberty, in the sense that it extinguished the absolute sovereignty of the family, the city, and the tribe, and replaced or modified these sovereignties by that of the State. Now, an absolute power is the more vexatious the more limited the area in which it is practised. The ancient republics and feudalism tyrannised over the individual much more than the State has ever done. Assuredly the Roman Empire at certain epochs severely persecuted Christianity; yet, at least, it did not suppress it. But the republics would have made it impossible; Judaism, had it not suffered the pressure of Roman authority, would have sufficed to stifle it. What prevented the Pharisees from slaying Christianity was the Roman magistracy.

Broad ideas of universal brotherhood, derived for the most part from Stoicism,

a kind of general feeling of humanity, were the fruits of the less restricted régime and the less exclusive education to which the individual was submitted. There were dreams of a new era and of new worlds. The public wealth was great, and, despite the defective economic doctrines of the time, prosperity was widely spread. The manners were not such as they are often imagined. At Rome, it is true, all vices flaunted with revolting cynicism; the spectacular shows especially had introduced frightful corruption. Certain countries, like Egypt, had also reached the lowest degradation. But in the majority of the provinces there was a middle-class in which good feeling, conjugal faith, the domestic virtues, and probity were sufficiently diffused. Is there anywhere an ideal of family life, in a world of honest citizens of little towns, more charming than that which Plutarch has left us? What good fellowship! what mildness of manners! what chaste and affectionate simplicity! Chæroneia was evidently not the only spot where life was so pure and so innocent.

Even outside Rome, usages were still somewhat cruel, whether as relics of ancient customs, everywhere so sanguinary, or by the special influence of Roman harshness. But in this matter progress was being made. What feeling pure and sweet, what impression of melancholy tenderness, had not found their most exquisite expression from the pen of Virgil or Tibullus? The world was growing supple, losing its ancient rigidity, acquiring softness and sensibility. Humane maxims spread abroad; equality and the abstract idea of the rights of man were loftily taught by Stoicism. Woman, thanks to the dowry system of Roman law, became more and more mistress of herself; the precepts on the proper treatment of slaves took a higher tone; Seneca ate with his. The slave is no longer that inevitably absurd and malicious being, whom the Roman comedy introduces to provoke roars of laughter, and whom Cato recommends his readers to treat as a beast of burden. The times are greatly altered now. The slave is morally his master's equal; it is acknowledged that he is capable of virtue, fidelity, and devotion, and he affords proofs of them. Prejudices about nobility of birth grew effaced. Several very humane and very just laws were decreed even under the bad Emperors. Tiberius was a skilful financier; he founded, on an excellent basis, a system of lending on landed security. Nero introduced into taxation, up till then iniquitous and barbarous, improvements which shame even our own time. Legislative progress was considerable, although the death penalty was still stupidly overdone. Love of the poor, sympathy with all, and almsgiving became virtues.

The theatre was one of the scandals most unendurable to worthy people, and one of the first causes to excite the antipathy of Jews and Judaisers of every order against the profane civilisation of the age. Those gigantic vats seemed to them the sink in which all vices boiled and bubbled. While the front tiers applauded, repulsion and horror were often manifested on the upper benches. Only with difficulty were gladiatorial shows established in the provinces. The Hellenic countries, at least, disapproved of them, and most often clung to the old Greek exercises. Bloody sports always retained in the East a very marked trace of Roman origin. The Athenians, out of emulation of Corinth, having one day met to discuss an imitation of those barbaric games, a philosopher is said to have risen and moved that in the first place the altar of Pity should be razed to the ground. Horror of the theatre, of the stadium, of the gymnasium—that is to say, of public places, of what essentially constituted a Greek or Roman city—was thus one of the deepest emotions of the Christians, and one of those which entailed most consequences. Ancient civilisation was a public civilisation; things took place in the open air before the assembled citizens; it was

the reverse of our societies in which life is lived privately and with closed doors, within the walls of the house. The theatre had inherited from the *agora* and the *forum*. The anathema cast upon the theatre was reflected upon the whole of society. A profound rivalry sprang up between the Church on one side and the public games on the other. The slave, driven away from the games, betook himself to the Church. I have never sat in those gloomy arenas, which are always the best preserved remains of an ancient city, without having witnessed in spirit the strife of the two worlds—here the poor honest man, already half a Christian, sitting in the back row, covering his face and going forth stung to indignation—there a philosopher suddenly standing up and reproaching the mob with its vileness. Such examples were rare in the first century. Protests, however, began to be heard. The theatre became a much discredited place.

The legislation and administrative regulations of the Empire were still an absolute chaos. The central despotism, the municipal and provincial liberties, the caprices of governors, the violent acts of independent communities, jostled one another in the strangest fashion. But religious freedom gained by such conflicts. The admirable uniform administration, which was established from the time of Trajan, was to be much more disastrous to the youthful sect than the irregularity of the time of the Cæsars, with its lack of rigorous police supervision and its unforeseen eventualities.

Institutions for public assistance, founded on the principle that the State has paternal duties to its members, were only widely developed after Nerva and Trajan. Nevertheless, some traces of them are to be found in the first century. There already existed relief for children, distributions of food to the needy, fixed rates for the sale of bread with an indemnity for traders, precautions for food supply, bounties and assurances for shipowners, vouchers for bread which permitted the purchase of wheat at a reduced price. All the Emperors, without exception, displayed the greatest solicitude for such questions, minor if you will, but at certain epochs taking the precedence of all others. In the depths of antiquity it can be said that the world had no need of charity. The world was young then and brave; the hospital was useless. The good and simple Homeric morality, according to which guest and beggar come from Jupiter, is the morality of gay and robust youth. Greece in her classical age enunciated the most exquisite maxims of pity, benevolence, and humanity, without infusing therein any undertone of social disquietude or melancholy. Man at that epoch was still sane and happy; he could not take account of evil. In the matter of institutions for mutual help the Greeks, moreover, had great priority of the Romans. Never was a liberal, kindly tendency manifested by that cruel nobility which, while the Republic lasted, exercised so oppressive a power. At the time we have reached, the colossal fortunes of the aristocracy, luxury, the great congestion of population at certain points, and, above all, the hardness of heart, peculiar to the Romans, and their aversion from pity, had brought about the birth of "pauperism." The indulgences of certain Emperors to the rabble of Rome had only aggravated the evil. The distributions of food, the *tesseræ frumentariæ*, encouraged vice and idleness, but provided no remedy for misery. Herein, as in many other things, the East had a real superiority over the Western world. The Jews possessed genuine charitable institutions. The Egyptian temples appear sometimes to have had a fund for the poor. The college of male and female recluses of the Serapeum of Memphis was also in some sense a charitable establishment. The terrible crisis through which humanity was passing in the capital of the Empire was little felt in distant countries, where life had remained

simpler. The reproach of having poisoned the earth, the similitude of Rome to a harlot who has poured the wine of her lust upon the world, was in many respects fair. The province surpassed Rome in worth; or, rather, the impure elements which from all quarters accumulated at Rome, as in a cesspool, had there formed a centre of infection, in which the old Roman virtues were stifled, and in which the good seeds that came from elsewhere developed but slowly.

The intellectual state of the different parts of the Empire was by no means satisfactory. In this respect there had been a real decadence. The higher culture of the mind is not so independent of political conditions as is private morality. Moreover, the progress of higher mental culture and that of morality are far from being parallel. Marcus Aurelius was assuredly a more upright man than all the ancient Greek philosophers; and yet his positive ideas on the realities of the universe are inferior to those of Aristotle and Epicurus; for at moments he believes in the gods as distinct and finite persons, in dreams and in auguries. The world in the Roman epoch achieved an advance in morality, and suffered a decline in science. From Tiberius to Nerva this decline is quite perceptible. The Greek genius, with an originality, a force, a wealth which have never been paralleled, had, centuries since, created the rational system of knowledge, the normal discipline of the intellect. That marvellous movement, dating from Thales and the earliest schools of Ionia (six hundred years before Jesus Christ), was almost at a standstill about the year 120 B.C. The last survivors of those five centuries of genius, Apollonius of Perga, Eratosthenes, Aristarchus, Hero, Archimedes, Hipparchus, Chrysippus, Carneades, and Panetius, had died without leaving successors. Posidonius and some astronomers are all that I see carrying on the old traditions of Alexandria, of Rhodes, of Pergamus. Greece, so skilful in creation, had not been capable of deriving from either her science or her philosophy a system of popular education, a safeguard against superstition. Although possessing admirable scientific institutions, Egypt, Asia Minor, and even Greece, were given over to the most foolish beliefs. Now, when science does not succeed in overpowering superstition, superstition stifles science. Betwixt these two opposed forces the duel is to the death.

Italy, in adopting Greek science, was momentarily able to breathe into it a new feeling. Lucretius had provided the model of the great philosophical poem, at once hymn and blasphemy, inspiring by turns serenity and despair, transfused with that profound sense of human destiny which was always lacking in the Greeks. The latter, true children as they were, took life so gaily that they never dreamed of cursing the gods, or of deeming nature unjust and treacherous to man. Graver thoughts came to birth among the Roman philosophers. But Rome was no more capable than Greece of making science the basis of a popular education. While Cicero, with an exquisite sense of style, was giving a finished form to the ideas which he borrowed from the Greeks; while Lucretius was at work on his amazing poem; while Horace was confessing to Augustus, who was no whit roused thereby, his frank scepticism; while one of the most delightful poets of the age, Ovid, was treating the most venerable fables in the spirit of an elegant libertine; while the great Stoics were deducing practical results from the Greek philosophy, the wildest chimeras found credence, faith in the miraculous was boundless. Never had there been greater interest in prophecy and prodigies. The fine eclectic deism of Cicero, carried to still higher perfection by Seneca, remained the belief of a small number of lofty minds, exercising no action upon their century.

The Empire had, until Vespasian, nothing that could be called public education. What later it had of that order

was almost limited to the dull exercises of grammarians; the general decadence was rather hastened than hindered. The last days of the republican government and the reign of Augustus witnessed one of the finest literary movements ever known. But after the great Emperor's death the decline was rapid, or, to put it better, was quite sudden. The intelligent and cultivated society of such as Cicero, Atticus, Cæsar, Mæcenas, Agrippa, and Pollio had vanished like a dream. No doubt there were still men of enlightenment, men conversant with the science of their time and occupying high social positions, such as the Senecas and the literary circle of which they were the centre, Lucilius and Gallio and Pliny. The body of Roman law, which is philosophy itself codified, Greek rationalism put into practice, continued its majestic growth. The great Roman families had preserved a substratum of high religious feeling and a great horror of superstition. The geographers Strabo and Pomponius Mela, the physician and encyclopædist Celsus, the botanist Dioscorides, the jurist Sempronius Proculus, were men with sound intellects. But they were exceptions. Apart from some thousands of enlightened men, the world was plunged in complete ignorance of the laws of nature. Credulity was a general disease. Literary culture was reduced to a hollow rhetoric which taught nothing. The essentially moral and practical course which philosophy had taken banished great speculations. Human knowledge, if geography be excepted, made no progress. The well-informed and lettered amateur took the place of the learned creator. The Romans' supreme defect made its fatal influence felt in this matter. That people, so great as rulers, were of secondary rank as thinkers. The most cultured Romans, such as Lucretius, Vitruvius, Celsus, Pliny, and Seneca, were, so far as positive science was concerned, pupils of the Greeks. Too often, even, it was the most indifferent Greek science which was indifferently imitated. The city of Rome never had a great scientific school. There charlatanism reigned almost without restraint. Finally, Latin literature, which certainly had admirable elements, flourished but a short time, and never emerged from the Western world.

Greece, happily, remained faithful to her genius. The prodigious splendour of the Roman power had dazzled and stunned, but had not prostrated, her. In fifty years she was to reconquer the world, she was anew to be the mistress of all who thought, she was to sit upon the throne with the Antonines. But at the present moment Greece was in one of her intervals of lassitude. Genius was rare; original science inferior to what it had been in the previous centuries, and to what it was to be in the century to follow. The school of Alexandria, which had been in decline for nearly two centuries, and which, nevertheless, in Cæsar's epoch still possessed Sosigenes, was now dumb.

From the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan we must needs then state a period of temporary deterioration for the human intellect. The ancient world is far from having said its last word; but the cruel ordeal through which it is passing bereaves it of voice and heart. Come but better days, and the intellect, freed from the crushing régime of the Cæsars, shall seem to live again. Epictetus, Plutarch, Dion Chrysostom, Quintilian, Tacitus, the younger Pliny, Juvenal, Rufus of Ephesus, Aretæus, Galen, Ptolemy, Hypsicles, Theon, and Lucian shall restore the fairest days of Greece, not of that inimitable Greece which has existed but once for the despair and charm of those who love the beautiful, but of a Greece rich and fecund still, which, mingling its gifts with those of the Roman spirit, shall produce new fruits full of originality.

The general standard of taste was very low. Great Greek writers were lacking. Such Latin writers as we know, the satirist Persius excepted, were commonplace and of no genius. Declamation

spoiled everything. The principle on which the public judged the works of the mind was almost the same as that of our own days. The one thing sought was the touch of brilliancy. Speech was no longer the simple garment of thought, deriving all its grace from its perfect proportion with the idea to be expressed. Speech was cultivated for its own sake. An author's aim in writing was to display his talent. The excellence of a "recitation" or public reading was estimated by the number of sayings greeted by applause with which it was sprinkled. The great principle that, æsthetically, all must serve for ornament, but that all inserted expressly for ornament is bad—that principle, I say, was utterly forgotten. The period was, if you will, a highly literary one. Nothing was talked of save eloquence and good style, and in reality nearly everybody wrote badly; there was not a single orator; for the good orator, the good writer, are people who make a trade of neither one nor the other. At the theatre the chief actor absorbed attention; pieces were suppressed that only the tit-bits, the *cantica*, might be declaimed. The prevailing spirit of literature was a silly dilettantism, which allured even the Emperors, a foolish vanity which led everyone to make proof of his wit. Thence the extreme insipidity of interminable "Theseids," of dramas made to be read in a coterie, an utter poetic banality which can only be compared with the epics and classical tragedies of sixty years ago.

Stoicism itself could not escape this defect, or at least was incapable, before Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, of finding a beautiful form wherewith to clothe its doctrines. What truly strange monuments are those tragedies of Seneca, in which the highest sentiments are expressed in the tone of an utterly boring literary charlatanism, indications at once of a progress in morals and of an irremediable deterioration in taste. As much must be said of Lucan. Tension of soul, the natural effect of what high tragedy the situation possessed, gave birth to a bombastic style, in which the one effort was to shine by fine sayings. There came to pass something analogous to what occurred among us under the Revolution; the most potent crisis on record scarce produced more than a literature of rhetoricians of an entirely declamatory cast. We need not stop there. New thoughts are sometimes expressed with a great deal of pretension. Seneca's style is sober, pure, and simple compared with that of St. Augustine. And yet we forgive St. Augustine his often detestable style, his tame *concetti*, because of his fine sentiments.

In any case, this education, noble and distinguished in many respects, did not reach the people. This would have been a minor drawback if the people had at least had some religious nutriment, something similar to what the most destitute portions of our modern societies receive at the church. But religion in all parts of the Empire was much debased. Rome, with lofty motives, had left the old worships standing, only pruning away what was inhuman, seditious, or hurtful to the others. Over all it had spread a kind of official varnish, which led them to resemble each other and, in a sort of a way, blended them together. Unfortunately these old worships, of very diverse origins, had one characteristic in common, which was an equal powerlessness to achieve a system of theological teaching, an applied morality, an edifying preaching, or a pastoral ministry really fruitful to the people. The pagan temple was in no respect what the synagogue and the church were in their palmy days—that is to say, a common abode, school, inn, hospital, shelter where the poor man went to seek a refuge. It was a cold *cella*, into which scarce any entered and in which nothing was learnt. The Roman worship was perhaps the least objectionable of those still practised. Purity of heart and body was in it considered part of religion. By its gravity, its decency, its austerity, this worship, certain farcical proceedings

analogous to our Carnival apart, was superior to the grotesque and ridicule-provoking rites which persons infected with Eastern crazes secretly introduced. The affectation which the Roman patricians used in distinguishing "religion"—that is to say, their own worship—from "superstition"—that is to say, foreign worships—may, however, seem to us somewhat puerile. All the pagan worships were essentially superstitious. The peasant who nowadays drops a sou in the poor-box of a chapel reputed miraculous, who invokes some saint or other for his oxen or his horses, who drinks a certain water in certain diseases, is in all these things a pagan. Nearly all our superstitions are the remains of a religion earlier than Christianity, which the latter has been unable entirely to root out. If to-day we should wish to recover the image of paganism, it is in some lost village, in the depths of the remotest provinces, that we should have to seek it.

Having as their only guardians a wavering popular tradition and interested officials, the pagan worships could not fail to degenerate into sycophancy. Augustus, albeit with some reserve, accepted worship during his lifetime in the provinces. Tiberius permitted the trial under his own eyes of that ignoble contest of the cities of Asia, disputing among themselves the honour of raising a temple to him. The extravagant impieties of Caligula produced no revulsion; outside Judaism not a single priest was to be found to resist such follies. Derived for the most part from a primitive worship of the forces of nature, transformed ten times over by intermixtures of every kind and by popular imagination, the pagan religions were limited by their past. There could not be deduced from them what was never there—deism, edification. The Fathers of the Church make us smile when they show up the misdeeds of Saturn as a paterfamilias, of Jupiter as a husband. But, assuredly, it was much more absurd still to set up Jupiter—that is to say, the atmosphere—as a moral god who commands, protects, rewards, and punishes. In a world which aspired to possess a catechism, what could be made of a worship like that of Venus, the consequence of an old social necessity in the first Phœnician navigation of the Mediterranean, but grown with time into an outrage upon what was more and more being regarded as the essence of religion?

On every side, in fact, the need for a monotheistic religion, giving divine precepts as a basis for morality, was being actively manifested. It is thus that epochs come when the naturalistic religions, reduced to simple childishness, to the quackery of sorcerers, can no longer satisfy societies in which humanity desires a moral, a philosophic religion. Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, responded to this need in India and Persia. Orphism and the mysteries had attempted the same thing in the Greek world, without any lasting success. At the period we have reached, the problem presented itself for the world as a whole with a kind of solemn unanimity and imperious grandeur.

Greece, it is true, formed an exception. Hellenism was much less outworn than the other religions of the Empire. Plutarch, in his little Bœotian town, subsisted on Hellenism, tranquil, happy, contented as a child, with the calmest religious conscience. In him is to be detected no trace of crisis, of rupture, of disquietude, of impending revolution. But it was only the Greek spirit which was capable of so child-like a serenity. Ever self-satisfied, proud of its past and of that radiant mythology all the holy places of which it possessed, Greece did not share in the inward torments with which the rest of the world was in travail. Alone, she did not summon Christianity to her; alone, she would fain have dispensed with it; alone, she claimed to do better. That was due to the eternal youth, to the patriotism, to the gaiety, which have always characterised the true Hellene, and which to this day make the Greek, as it were, a stranger to the

profound forebodings which prey upon us. Hellenism thus found itself in a position to essay a renascence which no other of the Empire's religions would have been able to attempt. In the second, third, and fourth centuries of our era Hellenism was to set itself up as an organised religion, by a sort of fusion of the Greek mythology and philosophy; and, with its thaumaturgical philosophers, its ancient sages exalted to the rank of seers, its legends of Pythagoras and Apollonius, was to entail on Christianity a competition which, though it remained powerless, was not the less the most dangerous obstacle which the religion of Jesus encountered upon its path.

That attempt was not yet manifest in the time of the Cæsars. The earliest philosophers to essay a kind of alliance between philosophy and paganism—Euphrates of Tyre, Apollonius of Tyana, and Plutarch—belong to the end of the century. We have small acquaintance with Euphrates of Tyre. Legend has so disguised the web of the true life of Apollonius that we know not whether he is to be counted among the sages, among the religious founders, or among the impostors. As for Plutarch, he is less a thinker, an innovator, than a moderate spirit who would fain set all the world in accord by making philosophy timid and religion half reasonable. In him there is nothing of Porphyry or of Julian. The Stoics' experiments in allegorical exegesis are very feeble. The mysteries, like those of Bacchus, in which the immortality of the soul was taught under graceful symbols, were limited to certain countries and had no widely-extended influence. Scepticism of the official religion was general in the enlightened class. The politicians who most affected to support the State worship made game of it in very pretty epigrams. The immoral principle that religious fables are only good for the people and must be maintained for their benefit was openly expressed. A very useless precaution, for the faith of the people itself was profoundly shaken.

From the accession of Tiberius, it is true, a religious reaction is perceptible. It seems as though the world were alarmed by the open incredulity of the times of Cæsar and Augustus; there is a prelude to Julian's ill-starred venture; all superstitions find themselves rehabilitated from reasons of State. Valerius Maximus affords the first example of an inferior writer putting himself in the service of theologians at bay, of a mercenary or corrupt pen set at the disposal of religion. But it is the alien worships that profit most by this reaction. The serious reaction in favour of the Græco-Roman worship is only to be manifested in the second century. The classes obsessed by religious disquietude are now turning to the worships imported from the East. Isis and Serapis find more favour than ever. Impostors of every species, thaumaturgists and magicians, profit by this necessity, and, as usually happens at epochs and in countries where the State religion is weak, multiply on every side; let us only recall the real or fictitious types of Apollonius of Tyana, Alexander of Abonoteichos, Peregrinus, and Simon of Gitton. These very errors and chimeras were as the prayer of the earth in travail, as the fruitless efforts of a world seeking its rule of life, and ending, at times, in its convulsive endeavours, at monstrous creations destined to oblivion.

On the whole, the middle of the first century is one of the worst epochs in ancient history. Greek and Roman society presents itself in a state of decadence from what has preceded, and very backward with regard to what is to follow. But the greatness of the crisis clearly revealed some strange and secret growth. Life seemed to have lost its motive forces; suicides multiplied. Never has century presented such a strife between good and evil. The evil was a formidable despotism which put the world in the hands of miscreants and madmen; it was the corruption of manners resulting from the introduction at Rome of the vices of the East; it was the absence of

a good religion and of a serious system of public education. The good was, on one side, philosophy, fighting with bared breast against tyrants, defying monsters, three or four times proscribed in the space of a half-century (under Nero, under Vespasian, under Domitian); it was, on another side, the efforts of popular virtue, those legitimate aspirations to a better religious state, that tendency to brotherhoods, to monotheistic worships, that rehabilitation of the poor, which were chiefly manifested under the auspices of Judaism and Christianity. Those two great protests were far from being in agreement; the philosophical party and the Christian party were unacquainted with each other, and they were so little conscious of the community of their endeavours, that the philosophical party, having succeeded to power by the accession of Nerva, was far from being favourable to Christianity. Truth to say, the Christians' design was much more sweeping. The Stoics, masters of the Empire, reformed it and reigned over the finest hundred years of the history of humanity. The Christians, masters of the Empire from the time of Constantine, achieved its ruin. The heroism of some must not make us forgetful of that of others. Christianity, so unfair to the pagan virtues, made it its business to slight those who had battled with the same foes as itself. In the resistance of philosophy in the first century there was as much grandeur as in that of Christianity; but how unequal the reward to the one and the other! The martyr who kicked over idols has his legend: Annæus Cornutus, who declared before Nero that the latter's books would never be worth those of Chrysippus; Helvidius Priscus, who told Vespasian to his face: "It is in you to slay, in me to die"; Demetrius the Cynic, who to Nero in a state of irritation, responded: "You threaten me with death, but nature threatens you therewith"—why have not they their image among the popular heroes whom all love and all salute? Has humanity so many forces at command against vice and meanness that it may be permitted each school of virtue to repudiate the aid of the others, and to maintain that it alone has the right to be valiant, proud, resigned?

Chapter XVIII.

THE RELIGIOUS LEGISLATION OF THE PERIOD

The Empire in the first century, while showing hostility to the religious innovations coming from the East, did not wage constant war upon them. The principle of the State religion was somewhat slackly maintained. On several occasions under the Republic foreign rites had been prohibited, in particular those of Sabazius, Isis, and Serapis. That was quite futile. The people were drawn to those worships as by an irresistible impulse. When in the year 535 of Rome the demolition of the temple of Isis and Serapis was decreed, not a single workman was to be found to undertake the work, and the consul was himself obliged to break down the gate with blows from an axe. It is clear that the Latin worship no longer sufficed the multitude. It is supposed, not unreasonably, that it was to flatter popular instincts that Cæsar re-established the worship of Isis and of Serapis.

With the profound and liberal intuition

which characterised him, that great man showed himself favourable to complete liberty of conscience. Augustus was more attached to the national religion. He had antipathy to the Eastern worships; he even interdicted the propagation of the Egyptian rites in Italy; but he wished that each worship, the Jewish worship in particular, should be master in its own land. He exempted the Jews from all that wounded their conscience, more especially from all civil duties on the Sabbath day. Some of those about his person showed less tolerance, and would fain have made him a religious persecutor for the benefit of the Latin worship. He does not appear to have given way to these fatal counsels. Josephus, who is suspected of exaggeration in this matter, even asserts that he made gifts of sacred vases to the Temple of Jerusalem.

It was Tiberius who first clearly laid down the principle of the State religion, and took serious precautions against the Jewish and Oriental propaganda. It must be remembered that the Emperor was *Pontifex Maximus*, and that in protecting the ancient Roman worship he was apparently accomplishing a duty of his position. Caligula withdrew the edicts of Tiberius; but his insanity permitted no consistent policy. Claudius seems to have imitated the policy of Augustus. At Rome he strengthened the Latin worship, showed concern at the progress made by the alien religions, took strong measures against the Jews, and pursued the brotherhoods with fury. In Judæa, on the contrary, he showed bounty to the natives. The favour enjoyed by the Agrippas at Rome during these two last reigns assured their co-religionists a powerful protection, except in cases where the Roman police exacted measures of security.

As for Nero, he paid small heed to religion. His abominable measures against the Christians were acts of ferocity, not legislative provisions. The instances of persecution mentioned in the Roman society of that time proceeded rather from family than from public authority. Moreover, such deeds were only perpetrated in the noble houses of Rome which preserved the ancient traditions. The provinces were perfectly free to observe their own worship on the sole condition of not molesting the worships of other lands. The provincial residents at Rome had the same right, providing they caused no scandal. The only two religions on which the Empire made war in the first century—Druidism and Judaism—were fortresses in which nationalities held their own. Everyone was convinced that the profession of Judaism implied contempt for the civil laws and indifference to the welfare of the State. When Judaism desired to be a simple personal religion, it was not persecuted. The severities against the worship of Serapis were possibly due to the monotheistic characteristics which it presented, and which already caused it to be confused with the Jewish and Christian worships.

No fixed law, then, in the time of the Apostles, forbade the profession of monotheistic religions. Such religions, up to the accession of the Syrian Emperors, were always kept under surveillance; but it is only from Trajan onwards that the Empire is to be seen systematically persecuting them, as hostile to the others, as intolerant, and as implying the negation of the State. In short, the one thing on which the Roman Empire declared war, in the matter of religion, was theocracy. Its principle was that of the secular State; it did not admit that a religion should have civil or political privileges of any kind; above all, it did not admit any association within the State, independent of the State. This last point is essential; it is, in truth, at the root of all persecutions. The law affecting brotherhoods, in a much greater degree than religious intolerance, was the fatal cause of the violent deeds which brought dishonour on the reigns of the best sovereigns.

The Greek countries had had priority over the Romans in association as in all

good and refined things. The Greek *eranes* or *thiases* of Athens, Rhodes, and the islands of the Archipelago had been excellent societies for mutual succour, credit, fire assurance, piety, and innocent recreation. Each *erane* had its decisions graven on stone, its archives, its common funds fed by voluntary gifts and by levies. The *eranists* or *thiasites* celebrated certain feasts in company and united for banquets, where cordiality reigned. The member, when short of money, could borrow from the funds on condition of repayment. Women formed part of these *eranes;* they had their own lady president *(proeranistrie).* The meetings were absolutely secret; order was kept by strict regulations; they apparently took place in closed gardens surrounded by porticoes or small buildings, in the midst of which rose the altar of sacrifice. Finally, each congregation had a body of dignitaries, drawn by lot for one year *(clerotes)*, according to the custom of the ancient Greek democracies, from which the Christian "clergy" may have derived its name. Only the president was elected. These officials made the recipient undergo a sort of examination, and had to certify that he was "holy, pious, and good." During the two or three centuries preceding our era there was in these little brotherhoods a movement almost as various as that which in the Middle Ages produced so many religious orders and subdivisions of these orders. In the island of Rhodes alone as many as nineteen have been counted, several of which bore the names of their founders and reformers. Some of the *thiases*, especially those of Bacchus, had lofty doctrines and sought to grant consolation to men of good will. If in the Greek world a little love and piety and religious morality still lingered on, it was thanks to the freedom of such private sects. In a sense they were competitors with the official religion, the desertion of which grew more marked from day to day.

At Rome associations of the same nature encountered more difficulties, and, in the poorer classes, not less favour. The principles of Roman policy on brotherhoods had been proclaimed for the first time under the Republic (186 B.C.) in connection with the Bacchanalia. The Romans had a natural taste for associations, in particular for religious associations; but such permanent congregations displeased the patricians, guardians of the public authority, who, in their narrow and barren conception of life, admitted no other social groups than the family and the State. The most minute precautions were observed: a preliminary authorisation was necessary, the number of members was limited, it was forbidden to have a permanent *magister sacrorum* or to establish a common fund by means of subscriptions. The same solicitude is shown on various occasions in the history of the Empire. The arsenal of the laws contained provisions for all kinds of repressions. But it depended on those in power whether they were put in force or not. Proscribed worships often reappeared very few years after their proscription. Foreign immigration, moreover, especially that of the Syrians, was constantly renewing the capital by which were maintained beliefs which it was vainly sought to suppress.

It is surprising to notice to what degree a subject, apparently of such secondary importance, engaged the most powerful intellects. One of the chief precautions of Cæsar and Augustus was to prevent the formation of new colleges and to destroy those already established. A decree, promulgated, it appears, under Augustus, attempted to give a clear definition of the legal limits of union and association. These limits were extremely circumscribed. The *collegia* must be solely for purposes of burial. They are only permitted one meeting a month; they can only concern themselves with the obsequies of deceased members; on no pretext must they enlarge their functions. The Empire was setting its heart upon the impossible. It desired by reason of its exaggerated conception of the State to isolate the individual, to

destroy every moral bond between men, to resist a legitimate longing of the poor, that of huddling together for warmth in some little place of refuge. In ancient Greece the city was very tyrannical; but in exchange for its vexations it gave so much pleasure, so much light, so much glory, that no one dreamed of complaining of them. For it men died with joy; without revolt they suffered its most unjust humours. But the Roman Empire was too vast to be a fatherland. To all it offered great material advantages; it provided nothing to love. The overwhelming sadness inseparable from such a life seemed worse than death.

Thus, despite all the efforts of politicians, the brotherhoods attained to vast developments. They were the exact analogy of the mediæval brotherhoods, with their patron saint and their common repasts. The great families had their solicitude for their name, for the State, for tradition; but the small and humble had only the *collegium*. In it they invested their affections. All the texts exhibit these *collegia* or *cœtus* as being formed of slaves, of veterans, of humble folk *(tenuiores)*. Therein equality reigned between free men, freedmen, and persons of servile condition. Women were numerous. At risk of a thousand annoyances, sometimes of the severest penalties, there was a general longing to be a member of one of the *collegia*, in which life was lived in the bonds of a pleasant confraternity, in which mutual aid was to be found, in which ties were contracted which lasted till death and after. The meeting-place, or *schola collegii*, usually had a tetrastyle (four-faced portico), on which were inscribed the rules of the college, beside the altar of the guardian god, and a *triclinium* for the repasts. The repasts, indeed, were impatiently awaited; they took place at the patronal festivals or on the anniversaries of certain brethren who had established foundations. Each brought his little basket; one of the brethren, taking his turn, provided the accessories of the dinner—that is to say, the beds, the table ware, the bread, the wine, the sardines, and hot water. The slave who had just been freed owed his comrades an amphora of good wine. A spirit of gentle gladness animated the feast; it was expressly provided that during its progress no business relating to the college should be discussed, so that nothing might disturb the quarter of an hour of joy and rest which the poor folk had procured themselves. Every disorderly act and every ill word was punished with a fine.

To all appearance these colleges were no more than co-operative funeral societies. But that alone would have sufficed to give them a moral character. At the Roman epoch, as in our time and in all times when religion is enfeebled, the piety of the tomb was almost the only one which the people retained. They delighted in the thought that they would not be cast into the horrible common trench, that the college would provide for their obsequies, that the brethren who came on foot to the funeral-pyre would receive a little honorarium of twenty centimes. Slaves, in particular, had need to believe that, if their master had their body thrown into the common sewer, there would be some friends to perform their "imaginary funeral rites." The poor man put his monthly sou in the common fund to procure after his death a little urn in a *columbarium*, with a marble tablet on which his name was graven. Entombment among the Romans, being intimately connected with the *sacra gentilitia* or family rites, had extreme importance. Persons buried together contracted a kind of intimate brotherhood and relationship.

This is why Christianity presented itself for long at Rome as a sort of funebrial *collegium*, and why the first Christian sanctuaries were the tombs of the martyrs. Had Christianity been nothing more, it would not have provoked so many severities; but it was something else besides; it had common funds, it boasted of being a complete

city in itself, it believed itself assured of the future. Entering on a Saturday evening the enclosure of a Greek church in Turkey, for example that of Saint Photini at Smyrna, one is impressed by the power of those little conclave religions in the midst of a persecuting or malignant society. The irregular cluster of buildings (church, presbytery, schools, and prison), the faithful coming and going in their little walled city, the freshly-opened tombs on which a lamp is burning, the corpse-like smell, the damp, musty feeling, the mumbling of prayers, the appeals for alms—all these form an atmosphere soft and warm, which a stranger may find at moments somewhat dull, but which must be very agreeable to the initiate.

The societies, once furnished with a special permit, had at Rome all the rights of citizens; but this permit was only granted with infinite restrictions, as soon as the societies had funds, and there was a question of doing more than bury each other. The pretext of religion or accomplishment of vows is foreseen and formally stated among the circumstances which give a meeting a criminal character; and the crime is none other than high treason, at least, in the case of the person inciting the meeting. Claudius went the length of closing the taverns where the brethren met, and suppressing the little eating-houses where poor people found meat and hot water at cheap rates. Trajan and the best Emperors regarded all the associations with distrust. The extreme humbleness of the persons concerned was an essential condition for the right of religious assemblage being granted; and even then it was only granted with many restrictions. The jurists who drew up the Roman law, so eminent as jurisconsults, gave the measure of their ignorance of human nature by pursuing in every possible way, even by the threat of the death penalty, and of obstructing by every kind of hateful or puerile precaution, an eternal yearning of the soul. Like the authors of our "Civil Code," they pictured life to themselves with mortal coldness. If life consisted in being amused to order, in eating one's crust of bread, in tasting pleasure in one's own rank and under the chief's supervision, it would all be very well conceived. But the penalty of the societies that give themselves over to that false and narrow course is first lassitude, then the violent triumph of the religious factions. Never will man consent to draw that glacial air; he must have his little retreat, the brotherhood where he and his fellows live and die together. Our great abstract societies are not enough to respond to all the social instincts of man. Let him set his heart on something, seek his consolation where he finds it, make to himself brethren, enter into bonds of love. Let not the State's icy hand meddle in this kingdom of the soul, which is the kingdom of liberty. Life and joy shall only be born in the world anew when our distrust of the *collegia*, that miserable heritage of the Roman law, shall have vanished away. Association outside the State, without detriment to the State, is the leading question of the future. The coming law on associations will decide if modern society is or is not to have the fate of ancient society. One example ought to suffice; the Roman Empire had linked its destiny with the law on the *cœtus illiciti*, the *illicita collegia*. The Christians and barbarians, fulfilling therein the work of the human conscience, shattered the law, and the Empire which had bound itself to it went down with it into the dust.

The Greek and Roman world—a secular world, a profane world, which had no conception of a priest, which possessed neither a divine law nor a revealed book—touched in this case on problems which it was powerless to solve. Let us add that if it had had priests, a rigid theology, a strongly organised religion, it would not have created the lay Church, it would not have inaugurated the idea of a rational society, a society founded on simple human needs and the natural relations

of individuals. The religious inferiority of the Greeks and Romans was the result of their political and intellectual superiority. The religious superiority of the Jewish people, on the other hand, was the cause of its political and philosophic inferiority. Judaism and primitive Christianity implied the negation, or rather the subjection, of the civil State. Like Mohammedanism, they founded society upon religion. When that direction is given to human things, great universal proselytisms are founded, there are Apostles scouring the world from one end to the other and converting it; but it is not the way to found political institutions, a national independence, a dynasty, a civil code, a people.

Chapter XIX.

THE FUTURE OF MISSIONS

Such was the world which the Christian missionaries undertook to convert. It must now be clear, it seems to me, that such an enterprise was not an act of madness, and that its success was not a miracle. The world was in travail with moral needs to which the new religion admirably responded. Manners were ameliorating; a purer worship was desired; the notion of the rights of man and ideas of social reforms were gaining on every side. On the other hand, credulity was extreme; the number of educated persons very small. Only let ardent apostles, Jews—that is to say, monotheists, disciples of Jesus—that is to say, men transfused with the sweetest moral preaching that the ear of man has as yet heard—present themselves before such a world, and assuredly they shall find a hearing. The dreams mingled with their teaching will be no obstacle to their success; the number of those who do not believe in the supernatural, in miracles, is very scanty. If they be humble and poor, so much the better. Humanity at the point which it has reached can only find salvation by an effort proceeding from the people. The ancient pagan religions are past mending; the Roman State is what the State will always be—harsh, unsympathetic, just, and severe. In this world, perishing for lack of love, the future belongs to him who will touch the living source of popular devotion. Greek liberalism and the old Roman seriousness are alike powerless for that.

The foundation of Christianity is, from this point of view, the greatest work that has ever been achieved by men of the people. Very speedily, no doubt, the men and women of the higher Roman nobility affiliated themselves to the Church. From the close of the first century Flavius Clemens and Flavia Domitilla show us Christianity creeping even into the palace of the Cæsars. From the early Antonines onwards there were rich members of the community. Towards the end of the second century some of the most considerable personages in the Empire are to be seen in it. But, at the outset, all, or nearly all, were humble. In the most ancient Churches the noble and the mighty are not to be found, any more than they are to be found in Galilee, in the company of Jesus. Now, in such great creations it is the first hour that counts. The glory of religions belongs entirely to their founders. Religions, in fact, are a matter of faith. To believe is a vulgar thing; the highest

achievement is to know how to inspire faith.

In seeking to reconstruct for ourselves these marvellous origins we usually represent things on the pattern of our own time, and are thus led into grave errors. The man of the people in the first century of our era, especially in Greek and Eastern countries, in no respect resembled his descendant of to-day. Education did not then raise between classes a barrier so strong as there is now. The Mediterranean races, if we except the populations of Latium, which had disappeared or had lost all importance since the Roman Empire, in conquering the world, had become the thing of the conquered peoples—these races, I say, had less solidity than ours, but they were lighter, livelier, keener-witted, more idealistic. The crushing materialism of our indigent classes, that air of dejection and decrepitude, the effect of our climates and the fatal legacy of the Middle Ages, which gives our poor an aspect so distressing, was not the failing of the poor with whom we deal here. Although very ignorant and very credulous, they were hardly more so than the men of wealth and power. We must not, then, imagine the foundation of Christianity as analogous to what a movement would be among us, proceeding from the proletariat and ending (an impossibility in our eyes) by winning the assent of men of culture. The founders of Christianity were men of the people, in the sense that they were clad and lived simply, that they spoke badly, or, rather, only sought in speaking to express their idea in a striking way. But they were only intellectually inferior to a very small number of men, survivors, every day rarer, of the great world of Cæsar and Augustus. Compared with the elect group of philosophers which formed the link between the Augustan century and that of the Antonines, the first Christians were of feeble intellect. Compared with the mass of the subjects of the Empire, they were enlightened. Sometimes they were treated as freethinkers; the cry of the rabble against them was, "Death to the atheists!" And that is not surprising. The world was making terrible progress in superstition. The first two capitals of the Christianity of the Gentiles, Antioch and Ephesus, were the two cities of the Empire most abandoned to superstitious beliefs. The second and the third century brought credulity and thirst for the marvellous to the point of mania.

Christianity was born outside the official world, but not exactly beneath it. It was in appearance, and in accord with worldly prejudices, that the disciples of Jesus were people of low degree. The worldly man loves what is proud and strong; he condescends to the humble man; honour, as he understands it, consists in not letting himself be insulted; he despises him who confesses to weakness, who suffers all, takes the lowest place, bestows his tunic, holds his cheek to the smiter. Therein is his error, for the weakling whom he disdains is usually his superior; the sum of virtue is in those who obey (servant-maids, workmen, soldiers, sailors, etc.) greater than in those who command and enjoy. And that is almost to be expected, since to command and enjoy, far from assisting virtue, is an obstacle in its way.

With marvellous insight Jesus understood how in the breast of the people is the great reservoir of devotion and resignation which saves the world. That was why he declared the poor blessed, judging that it was easier for them than for others to be good. The primitive Christians were essentially poor men. "Poor men" was their name. Even when the Christian was rich, in the second and third centuries, he was still in spirit a *tenuior;* he was saved thanks to the law on the *collegia tenuiorum.* The Christians were certainly not all slaves and persons of low degree; but the social equivalent of a Christian was a slave; what was said of a slave was said of a Christian. On either part the same virtues were honoured — kindness, humility,

resignation, and mildness. The judgment of the pagan authors is in this matter unanimous. All without exception notice in the Christian the features of the servile character, indifference to great things, a sorrowful and contrite air, a sour opinion of the age, aversion from games, the theatres, gymnasia, and baths.

In a word, the pagans were the world; the Christians were not of the world. They were a little flock apart, hated by the world, deeming the world evil, seeking to keep themselves "unspotted from the world."[1] The ideal of Christianity was to be the reverse of that of the worldly. The perfect Christian was to love to be abject; he was to have the virtues of the poor and simple, of him who seeks not self-advancement. But he was to have the defects of his qualities; he was to declare vain and frivolous many things which are not so; he was to dwarf the universe; he was to be the foe or the scorner of beauty. A system in which the Venus of Milo is but an idol is a false, or at least a partial, system; for the beautiful is worth nearly as much as the good and the true. Decadence in art is, in any case, inevitable with such ideas. The Christian was to take thought neither to build well, nor to sculpture well, nor to draw well; he was too much of an idealist. He was to crave little for knowledge; curiosity seemed to him a vain thing. Confounding the great rapture of the soul, which is one way of touching the infinite, with vulgar pleasure, he was to forbid himself enjoyment. He was too virtuous.

Another law presents itself at this point as destined to dominate this history. The establishment of Christianity synchronises with the suppression of political life in the Mediterranean region; Christianity is born and diffused at an epoch when there is no longer a spirit of nationality. If anything be entirely lacking in the founders of the Church, it is patriotism. They are not cosmopolitans, for the whole planet is for them a place of exile; they are idealists in the most absolute sense of the word. Our native land is a combination of body and soul. The soul is the memories, the usages, the legends, the misfortunes, the hopes, the common regrets; the body is the soil, the race, the language, the mountains, the rivers, the characteristic products. Now, never was anyone more detached from all these things than the first Christians. They do not hold by Judæa; in a few years' time they have forgotten Galilee; the glory of Greece and of Rome is a matter of indifference to them. The countries in which Christianity was first set up—Syria, Cyprus, Asia Minor—no longer recall the days of their freedom. Greece and Rome still have a great national sentiment. But at Rome patriotism survives in the army and in certain families; in Greece, Christianity is only fruitful in results at Corinth, a city which, since its destruction by Mummius and its rebuilding by Cæsar, has been an aggregation of people of every sort. The true Greek provinces—then, as now, deeply and jealously absorbed in the memory of their past—lent themselves but little to the new preaching; they were always indifferently Christian. On the contrary, those effeminate, gay, voluptuous lands of Asia and Syria, lands of pleasure and unrestraint of conduct, easy-going, accustomed to get their life and government from abroad, had nothing to abdicate in the matter of pride and traditions. The oldest metropoles of Christianity, Antioch, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome, were international cities—if I may dare to say so, cities after the fashion of modern Alexandria—into which all races flowed, and in which the union between the man and the soil, which constitutes a nation, was absolutely broken.

The importance accorded to social questions is always in inverse ratio with political considerations. Socialism takes the upper hand when patriotism weakens. Christianity was the explosion of social and religious ideas, which had been

[1] James i. 27.

necessarily impending since Augustus had put an end to political strife. A universal worship like Islamism, Christianity was to be essentially the foe of nationalities. Many centuries and many schisms were to be needful for national Churches to be made out of a religion which at the outset was the negation of every earthly fatherland, which was born at an epoch when there was no longer in the world either city-state or citizen, and which the old republics, rigorous and strong, of Italy and Greece would have assuredly expelled as a mortal poison to the State.

We have here one of the causes of the greatness of the new faith. Humanity is a various thing, ever changing, ever pulled about by conflicting desires. Great is love of country, and holy are the heroes of Marathon, of Thermopylæ, of Valmy, of Fleurus. Love of country, however, is not everything here below. One is a man and a son of God before being a Frenchman or a German. The kingdom of God, an eternal dream which shall never be torn from the heart of man, is the protest against the too exclusive quality of patriotism. The thought of an organisation of humanity, in view of its greatest happiness and its moral amelioration, is Christian and legitimate. The State is capable, and can only be capable, of one thing—that of organising egoism. That is no matter of indifference, for egoism is the most potent and most available of human motives. But it does not suffice. The governments which have set out with the assumption that man is composed of only sordid instincts have been self-deceived. Devotion is as natural as egoism to the man of a great race. The organisation of devotion is religion. Let us not hope, therefore, to dispense either with religion or with religious associations. All progress in modern societies will render that need more imperious.

It is in such a manner that these narratives of strange events may for us be full of instruction and examples. There is no need to hesitate over certain features, to which the difference of time gives a grotesque air. When it is a question of popular beliefs, there is always a vast disproportion between the grandeur of the ideal goal pursued by faith and the pettiness of the material circumstances which have induced belief. Hence the peculiarity that, in religious history, unpleasant details and acts suggesting insanity can be mingled with all that is most sublime. The monk who invented the holy ampulla was one of the founders of the kingdom of France. Who would not willingly efface from the life of Jesus the episode of the Gadarene demoniacs? Never has sober-minded man done the deeds of Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, Peter the Hermit, Ignatius Loyola. Nothing is more relative than the word "madness" applied to the human mind of the past. If the ideas current in our own days had been followed, there was not a prophet, not an apostle, not a saint who would not have been put in confinement. The human consciousness is very unstable at epochs when reflection is unadvanced; in such states of soul it is by imperceptible transitions that good becomes evil and evil good, that beauty borders on ugliness and that ugliness becomes beauty again. No justice can be done the past if that be not admitted. A single divine breath permeates all history and causes its admirable unity; but the variety of combinations which the human faculties are capable of producing is infinite. The Apostles differ less from us than do the founders of Buddhism, who were, nevertheless, more akin to us by language and probably by race. Our own century has witnessed religious movements quite as extraordinary as those of former times, movements which have roused as much enthusiasm, which have already had proportionately more martyrs, and the future of which is still uncertain.

I do not speak of the Mormons, a sect in some respects so foolish and so abject that one hesitates to take it seriously. It is, however, instructive to notice, in the middle of the nineteenth

century, thousands of men of our own race, living in the miraculous, believing with a blind faith in marvels which they declare they have seen and touched. There is already a whole literature to demonstrate the harmony of Mormonism and science; what is better is that this religion, based on silly impostures, has been capable of achieving prodigies of patience and abnegation; in another five hundred years doctors will be proving its divinity by the wonders of its foundation. Bâbism in Persia has been a phenomenon important in another way. A man of mild disposition and of no pretensions, a sort of pious and modest Spinoza, found himself, almost in spite of himself, raised to the rank of a thaumaturgist of divine incarnation, and became the leader of a numerous sect, fervent and fanatical, which almost brought about a revolution comparable with that of Islam. For his sake, thousands of martyrs flocked to their death. A day unparalleled perhaps in the world's history was that of the great massacre of the Bâbis at Teheran. "On that day was to be seen in the streets and bazaars of Teheran," says a narrator, who has first-hand knowledge,[1] "a spectacle which it does not seem that the population can ever forget. When conversation, even to-day, turns on the matter, one can judge of the admiration mingled with horror, which the multitude experienced, and which the lapse of years has not diminished. Women and children were to be seen advancing between the ranks of executioners, their flesh slashed all over the body, with flaming matches thrust in the wounds. The victims were dragged along by ropes, and forced to walk with blows of the whip. Women and children advanced, singing a verse, which says: 'In truth we come from God, and unto him we return!' Their voices swelled loud above the profound stillness of the crowd. When one of the victims fell and was forced to get up by blows from the whip or a stab from a bayonet, however little strength the loss of blood, streaming down all his limbs, still left him, he started dancing and crying with renewed enthusiasm: 'In truth we are God's, and unto him we return!' Some of the children expired in the course of the journey. The executioners cast their dead bodies under the feet of their fathers and sisters, who trod proudly over them, and did not give them a second glance. When the place of execution was reached, the victims were again offered their lives for their recantation. One executioner took it into his head to say to a father that, if he did not give way, he would cut the throats of his two sons on his breast. These were two little boys, the elder of whom was fourteen, and who, red with their own blood, their flesh charred, coldly listened to this colloquy; the father replied, lying down on the ground, that he was ready, and the elder of the children, eagerly claiming his right of birth, asked to be slain first. At last all was finished; the night fell upon a formless heap of flesh; the heads were hung in bundles on the stake of justice, and the dogs of the suburbs slunk in troops to the spot."

This happened in 1852. The sect of Mazdak, under Chosroes Nushirvan, was stifled in a similar bath of blood. Absolute devotion is for simple natures the most exquisite of delights and a sort of necessity. In the affair of the Bâbis, people who scarce belonged to the sect were seen coming forward to make self-accusation, that they might be added to the victims. It is so sweet to man to suffer for something, that in many cases the bait of martyrdom suffices to cause belief. A disciple, who was the comrade in suffering of the Bâb, hanging by his side on the ramparts of Tabriz and awaiting death, had but one word in his mouth: "Are you satisfied with me, master?"

Persons who regard as miraculous or chimerical what in history transcends the calculations of ordinary common sense must find such facts inexplicable.

[1] J. A. de Gobineau: *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, p. 304 *et seq.*

The fundamental condition of criticism is ability to understand the diverse conditions of the human spirit. Absolute faith is for us an utterly alien phenomenon. Outside the positive sciences, which are of a certitude in some measure material, every opinion is in our eyes only an approximation, implying both an element of truth and an element of error. The element of error may be small as you will; it is never reduced to zero when we are dealing with moral things, implicating a question of art, language, literary form, and personalities. Such is not the manner of seeing of narrow and stubborn minds—of Orientals, for instance. The eye of such people is not like ours; it is the enamel eye of the figures in mosaics, dull and fixed. They can see but one thing at once, and that thing obsesses them, takes hold of them; they are no longer free, then, to believe or not to believe; there is no longer room in them for a reflective after-thought. For an opinion thus embraced men go to their death. The martyr is in religion what the party man is in politics. There have not been many very intelligent martyrs. The confessors of the time of Diocletian must have been, after the peace of the Church, worrying and dictatorial persons. Nobody is very tolerant who believes that he is quite right, and that the others are quite wrong.

The great religious conflagrations, being the consequence of a very rigid manner of seeing things, have thus become enigmas for a century like ours, in which the rigour of convictions has been weakened. Among us the sincere man is constantly modifying his opinions —in the first place, because the world changes; in the second place, because the observer changes also. We believe in several things at once. We love justice and truth; for them we would venture our lives; but we do not admit that justice and truth are the monopoly of any one sect or party. We are good Frenchmen; but we confess that the Germans, the English, are in many respects our betters. It is not thus at epochs and in countries where each is whole-heartedly of his own communion, his own race, his own political school; and that is why all the great religious creations have taken place in societies, the prevailing spirit of which was more or less analogous to that of the East. Up till now, in fact, absolute faith has alone succeeded in imposing itself upon others. A good servant-maid of Lyons, Blandina, who went to her death for her faith seventeen hundred years ago, a brutal tribal chief, Clovis, who saw good, nearly fourteen centuries ago, to embrace Catholicism, still make the law for us.

Who has not paused, in passing through our modernised ancient towns, at the foot of the gigantic monuments of the faith of old? All about them has been rebuilt; there is no longer a vestige of the habitations of a former day; the cathedral has remained, a little defaced, maybe, so high as man's hand can reach, but deeply rooted in the soil. *Mole sua stat!* Its huge bulk is its justification. It has withstood the deluge which has swept away all about it; not one of the men of olden time, returning to visit the places where he lived, would find his abode; alone the raven which has built its nest in the heights of the sacred fane has never seen the hammer raised upon its dwelling. Strange enactment! Those worthy martyrs, those rude converts, those extortionate builders of churches, wield over us an eternal sway. We are Christians, because it pleased them to be so. As in politics it is only the barbaric foundations that endure, in religion it is only the spontaneous, and, if I may dare to say so, the fanatical affirmations, that are contagious. The fact is that religions are entirely popular creations. Their success does not depend on the more or less sound proofs that they furnish of their divinity; their success is in ratio with what they speak to the heart of the people.

Are we from this to conclude that religion is destined to dwindle little by little, and finally to disappear like popular

errors about magic and sorcery and spirits? Assuredly not. Religion is not a popular error; it is a great instinctive truth, perceived by the people, expressed by the people. All the creeds which serve to give a form to religious feeling are defective, and it is their fate to be cast aside one after the other. But nothing can be falser than the dream of certain persons, who, seeking to conceive a perfect humanity, conceive it lacking religion. It is the reverse which must be said. China, which presents an inferior humanity, has scarce any religion. On the contrary, let us suppose a planet inhabited by a humanity whose intellectual, moral, and physical power is double that of earthly humanity; that humanity would be at least twice as religious as ours. I say "at least," for it is probable that the augmentation of the religious faculties would proceed in more rapid progression than the augmentation of the intellectual capacity, and would not be in simple, direct proportion. Let us suppose a humanity ten times stronger than ours; that humanity would be infinitely more religious. It is even probable that, at that pitch of sublimity, untrammelled by all material cares and all egoism, invested with perfect discrimination and divinely subtle taste, seeing the baseness and vacuity of all that is not truth and goodness and beauty, man would be transcendently religious, plunged in an eternal adoration, passing from ecstasy to ecstasy, being born, living, and dying in a torrent of rapturous delight. Egoism, in fact, which denotes the measure of the inferiority of beings, decreases in proportion as the animal is left behind. A perfect being would be no longer egoistic; he would be absolutely religious. Progress, then, will have as its effect the augmentation of religion, not its destruction or diminution.

But it is time to return to the three missionaries, Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark, whom we have left at the moment of their leaving Antioch by the gate which leads to Seleucia. In my third Book I shall attempt to follow the track of those messengers of good tidings over sea and land, in calm and tempest, through good and evil days. I am impatient to tell again that unparalleled epic, to depict those roads stretching infinitely through Asia and Europe, along which they sowed the seed of the Gospel, those waves over which they fared so often under conditions so diverse. The great Christian Odyssey is about to begin. Already the apostolic bark has shaken forth her sails; the wind is blowing, and aspires for nought save to bear upon its wings the words of Jesus.

List of Publications

(Alphabetically Arranged) Issued for the

Rationalist Press Association

(LIMITED)

BY

WATTS & CO.,

17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

(For Sixpenny Series see back of cover.)

ANDERSON, GEORGE.—**Some Chapters in a Rationalist's Life.** With Introduction by G. J. Holyoake. 72 pp., with portrait of the Author, 6d., by post 8d.

ANONYMOUS.—**Supernatural Religion:** An Inquiry into the Reality of Divine Revelation. Popular Edition, thoroughly revised by the Author. xvi.–920 pp.; cloth, 6s. net, by post 6s. 6d.; half morocco, gilt edges, 10s. net, by post 10s. 6d.

A really great work, pronounced by Matthew Arnold to be "learned and exact," and by John Morley to be "decisive, trenchant, and far-reaching," the author stating "his case with a force which no previous English writer on the negative side can have the smallest claim to rival."

—— **Mr. Balfour's Apologetics Critically Examined.** 232 pp.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 4d.

"A piece of thorough good work: exhaustive, demolishing, and withal high-toned."—EDWARD CLODD.

—— **The Construction of the Bible and the Koran.** 1d., by post 1½d.

BITHELL, RICHARD, Ph.D.—**A Handbook of Scientific Agnosticism.** 64 pp.; cloth, 2s.; by post 2s. 3d.; paper, 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

BÜCHNER, PROFESSOR LUDWIG.—**Last Words on Materialism** and Kindred Subjects. Translated by Joseph McCabe. With Portrait of the Author and Biographical Sketch by his brother, Professor Alex Büchner. xxxiv.–299 pp.; 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 10d.

CALLAWAY, CHARLES, M.A., D.Sc.—**Does Determinism Destroy Responsibility?** 16 pp.; 2d., by post 2½d.

CLODD, EDWARD.—**Thomas Henry Huxley.** (Modern English Writers' Series.) Cloth, 2s. 6d., by post 2s. 9d.

CRANBROOK, REV. JAMES.—**The Founders of Christianity.** 242 pp., good paper and print, 6d., by post 8½d.

This book consists of a series of lectures delivered by the author after leaving the Church, setting forth concisely the main results then attained by rational criticism of Christian origins, with independent views of his own, some of which anticipate later research. Marked by sincerity and simplicity, the book testifies alike to competent learning and long and earnest study.

CROSSFIELD, HENRY.—**England and Islam.** 55 pp.; 3d. net, by post 4d.

DIXIE, LADY FLORENCE.—**Towards Freedom.** An Appeal to Thoughtful Men and Women. 14 pp.; 2d., by post 2½d.

EDWARDS, CHILPERIC.—**The Hammurabi Code and the Sinaitic Legislation.** With a complete translation of the great Babylonian inscription discovered at Susa. Cloth, xvi.–168 pp.; 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 10d.

There have been issued several books dealing with the famous Hammurabi Code—each in its way valuable; but the present work may fairly claim to be *the* handbook of the moment. It is clearly and legibly printed, has the comp'ete text, and expounds the relation of the Code to the Mosaic laws. Its price is much below that of all its competitors, except one; and the get-up generally is everything that could be desired. The author has had access to the same sources of knowledge as the other writers on the subject, and full authorities are given for the more important conclusions.

FORESTER, GEORGE.—**The Faith of an Agnostic;** or, First Essays in Rationalism. Cloth, 5s.

GLANVILLE, W. (ex-Baptist Minister).—**The Web Unwoven;** or, The Dolus Theory of the Book of Acts, as presented in a Critique of Chapters X., XI., and XII. of same. 3d. net, by post 5d.

GODFREY, W. S.—**Theism Found Wanting.** 2d., by post 3d.

GORHAM, CHARLES T.—**Ethics of the Great Religions.** 80 pp.; paper, 6d., by post 8d.; cloth, 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

Under the term "Great Religions" Mr. Gorham embraces Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Mohammedanism. From the scriptures of each of these faiths he culls the finer precepts and reflections, connecting them with explanatory sections and critical observations.

—— **The Ethics of the Great French Rationalists.** 101 pp.; cloth, 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

This little work comprises brief biographical sketches of Charron, Condorcet, Montaigne, Rousseau, Voltaire, Michelet, Comte, Renan, and others, with carefully-chosen selections from their writings on Religion and Ethics.

—— **Faith: its Freaks and Follies.** 104 pp.; 6d. net, by post 8d.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 3d.

—— **The Transformation of Christianity.** A Summary of the Principal Conclusions embodied in the *Encyclopædia Biblica.* 16 pp.; 1d., by post 1½d.

GOULD, F. J.—**Concise History of Religion.** 3 vols. Vol. I., 2s. 6d.; Vol. II., 3s. 6d.; Vol. III., 5s.

No work of the same size and dealing with this important theme contains such a mass of information. All the highest authorities have been carefully consulted, and the book gives the main results of Biblical criticism, together with other valuable matter, in what is, by comparison at least, a nutshell. The *First Volume* treats of the superstitions of savages and primitive man, and delineates the characteristics of the religions of America, Finland, China, Egypt, Arabia, Chaldæa, Syria, India, Japan, Persia, the Kelts, Greeks, and Romans. The *Second Volume* takes to pieces the whole of the Old Testament literature, and explains the origin of the various parts. The last chapter describes the Religious Environment of Early Christianity. The *Third Volume* traces the growth of the Christian movement, the lives of Paul and Jesus (with due separation of the mythical elements), and affords a Rationalistic analysis of the whole of the New Testament books.

GOULD, F. J.—**Tales from the Bible.** 103 pp.; boards, 6d. net, by post 8d.; cloth, 9d. net, by post 1s.

The chief legends of the Old Testament are told in choice and simple language, and with careful exclusion of all matter unsuited to the young mind. The children are all along bidden to remember that the Bible history is not to be accepted as literally true.

—— **Tales from the New Testament.** 176 pp.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 3d.

Rationalist parents and teachers will find this rendering of the New Testament myths and parables a judicious means by which children may be taught both the unhistorical character of the Christian gospel and the value of the moral teaching which it enshrines. The incidents are picturesquely presented, and dialogue is frequently interspersed.

—— **Will Women Help?** 100 pp.; 6d. net, by post 8d.

A stirring appeal to assist in the work of mental emancipation and moral reform. The book is written under the conviction that progress is seriously hindered by the reluctance of women to join the Rationalistic movement.

—— **The Agnostic Island.** 124 pp.; boards, 1s., by post 1s. 2d.; cloth, 2s., by post 2s. 3d.

A tale of an Agnostic Settlement in the remote waters of New Guinea visited by three missionaries from Exeter Hall.

—— **The Children's Book of Moral Lessons.** First Series, ("Self-Control" and "Truthfulness"), 205 pp.; cloth, 2s., by post 2s. 3d. Second Series ("Kindness" and "Work and Duty"), 204 pp.; cloth, 2s., by post 2s. 3d. Third Series ("The Family"; "People of Other Lands"; "History of Industry, Art, Science, and Religion"), 203 pp.; cloth, 2s., by post 2s. 3d.

While theology is strictly excluded from the lessons here reproduced, they are constructed on such a humanitarian basis as to fit them for use in homes and schools of all classes and creeds.

—— **The Children's Book of Moral Lessons.** First Series. Cheap Edition. 128 pp.; paper covers, 6d.; cloth 1s., by post 1s. 3d. (With design by Walter Crane.)

—— **Religion of the First Christians.** Beautifully bound, gold lettered, 2s. 6d.

"Absorbingly interesting.....We strongly recommend the perusal of this enlightening book. Mr. Gould's style is characterised by lucidity and logic. He achieves the chief end of all literature—to make your subject interesting."—*Reynolds's.*

—— **The New Conversion.** 14 pp.; 2d., by post 2½d.

In this lecture the author translates the doctrine of Conversion into terms which harmonise with Rationalist modes of thought. The pamphlet is not so much an argument as an appeal, and may be appropriately placed in the hands of earnest persons whose faith in the Christian system is beginning to waver, and who are looking for a new moral basis.

—— **The Ethical Riches.** 14 pp.; 2d., by post 2½d.

This pamphlet is of the same character as *The New Conversion.* It serves both as an exhortation to personal and social effort after a higher moral life, and as a plain exposition of the general teaching of the Ethical Movement.

—— **The Building of the Bible.** Showing the Chronological Order in which the Books of the Old and New Testaments appeared according to Recent Biblical Criticism; with Notes on Contemporary Events. 24 pp.; 3d., by post 4d.

In a succession of clearly-arranged paragraphs, each devoted to a particular

century, Mr. Gould exhibits a scheme which "represents in a general way the manner in which the component parts of the Bible followed one after the other, from the eleventh century B.C. to the second C.E. (Christian Era)."

GOULD, F. J.—**Plan of Moral Instruction.** 15 pp. No price is marked on this publication, as it is intended for free distribution. The publishers will send single copies gratis to any applicants, and quantities will be supplied on the following terms: One dozen, 8d.; a hundred, 5s.; a thousand, £1 10s.

The "Plan" sums up the leading arguments in favour of secular moral instruction, and submits a detailed syllabus of ethical lessons. The paper has been adopted by the Moral Instruction League, and is well adapted for circulation among school teachers, Boards of Managers, Members of Parliament, etc.

GREGORY, Mrs. F. K.—**New Stories for Children.** Boards, 1s. 6d. net, by post 1s. 10d.; cloth, 2s. net, by post 2s. 4d.

These stories aim to inculcate a love of the civic virtues apart from any reference to theology. The work is fully illustrated by Mr. Reginald Jones.

HAECKEL, Professor ERNST.—**The Evolution of Man.** In two vols, royal 8vo, 948 pp., 28 plates, 512 illustrations; 42s. net.

—— **The Wonders of Life.** A Popular Study of Biological Philosophy. xiv.–501 pp.; cloth, 6s. net, by post 6s. 4d.

HEDDERWICK, J. A.—**Do We Believe?** A Rationalist's Analysis of the *Daily Telegraph* Controversy. 64 pp.; 6d., by post 8d.; cloth, 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

HIRD, DENNIS.—**An Easy Outline of Evolution.** With numerous illustrations. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 10d.

Written in the simplest possible language and referring to the latest researches, this work is intended to aid the busy general reader to grasp the arguments in favour of Evolution as they now stand.

HOLYOAKE, G. J.—**The Origin and Nature of Secularism:** Showing that where Freethought commonly ends Secularism begins. 136 pp.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 3d.

This is the author's final pronouncement on the Religion of Daily Life, by which phrase he aptly denominates his Secular teachings. He desires to be judged, if at all, by the views set forth in this interesting and brightly-written work.

—— **Two Great Preachers:** The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker. Or, Appreciation Distinct from Concurrence. Paper wrapper, 3d., by post 3½d.

—— **The Logic of Death.** With cover, 3d., by post 3½d.; without cover, on thin paper, 1d., by post 1½d.

HUXLEY, Thomas Henry.—**Possibilities and Impossibilities.** With Addenda. Paper wrapper, 2d., by post 2½d.

JEKYLL, WALTER, M.A.—**The Bible Untrustworthy.** A critical comparison of contradictory passages in the Scriptures, with a view of testing their historical accuracy. Cloth, xii.–284 pp.; 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 10d.

The author of this work, despite his searching criticism, writes with great persuasiveness and a pleasant humour, and certainly not an unkind or bitter word or sentence will be found throughout his 300 pages. The literary value of the book is unquestionable; and the author has compiled a work which should be an effective weapon in the Rationalist armoury.

LAING, SAMUEL.—**A Modern Zoroastrian.** Cloth, 2s. net, by post 2s. 5d. Cheap Edition, 128 pp.; 6d., by post 8d.; cloth, 1s., by post, 1s. 3d.

—— **Problems of the Future, and Essays.** Cloth, 2s. net, by post 2s. 5d.

LIBERAL CANDIDATE, A.—**An Educational Concordat.** 2d., by post 2½d.

McCABE, J. (lately Very Rev. FATHER ANTONY, O.S.F.).—**From Rome to Rationalism;** or, Why I Left the Church. 32 pp.; 3d., by post 4d.

In 1896 "Father Antony" startled the English Romanists by abandoning the creed which he had served for twelve years, and since then, by lectures and a series of scholarly essays and books, he has amply justified his change of profession. Mr. McCabe examines the problems that centre round the conceptions of God, the Soul, and Christ, and concludes with an entire rejection of supernatural doctrines.

—— **Modern Rationalism.** Being a Sketch of the Progress of the Rationalistic Spirit in the Nineteenth Century. 193 pp ; paper covers, 1s., by post 1s. 3d.; cloth, 2s. 6d. post free.

In a succession of six interesting and informing sketches Mr. McCabe delineates the work of the critical or Agnostic spirit in theology, Biblical Criticism, Comparative Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics.

—— **The Religion of the Twentieth Century.** 102 pp.; 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

Contents:—The Right and Duty of Reason—The Effect of Science on Religion—Rational Analysis of the Old Faith—Authority an Impossible Basis —Morality as a Connecting Link—A New and a Firmer Faith.

—— **The Religion of Woman:** An Historical Study. 200 pp.; 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 10d.

—— **Glossary to "The Riddle of the Universe."** 1d., by post 1½d.

MORIES, A. S.—**Haeckel's Contribution to Religion.** 88 pp.; 6d., by post 7½d.

The author of this *brochure* writes from a Theistic standpoint, and argues that Professor Haeckel, in his famous *Riddle*, makes a contribution to religion that is of the highest importance to modern thought.

MORTIMER, GEOFFREY.—**The New Morality.** 96 pp.; 6d. net, by post 8d.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 3d.

NEWMAN, PROFESSOR F. W.—**Christianity in its Cradle.** 172 pp.; cloth, 2s. 6d. post free.

—— **Negro Slavery**—Anglo-Saxon Abolition of. 136 pp.; cloth, 2s., by post 2s. 3d.

—— **The Soul:** Its Sorrows and its Aspirations. 162 pp.; cloth, 2s., by post 2s. 3d.

—— **Hebrew Theism:** The Common Basis of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. 172 pp ; boards, 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

—— **A Christian Commonwealth.** 60 pp.; cloth, 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

—— **What is Christianity Without Christ?** 28 pp.; 6d., by post 7d.

—— **The Relation of Professional to Liberal Knowledge.** 30 pp.; 6d., by post 7d.

PICTON, JAMES ALLANSON.—**The Bible in School:** A Question of Ethics. 6d. net, by post 8d.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s 3d.

Mr. Picton (for many years M.P. for Leicester) was one of the three members of the first London School Board who voted against Bible teaching in the schools, and, after thirty years' observation of the methods employed under the Compromise, he feels justified in reiterating his views. He does not by any means disparage the educative value of the Bible, but argues that the present system is unjust to many ratepayers, demoralising to many teachers, and worse than useless in its effect on the children. The booklet presents a powerful plea for the exclusion of the Bible from the schools.

PLUMPTRE, CONSTANCE E.—**On the Progress of Liberty of Thought during Queen Victoria's Reign.** 6d. net, by post 8d.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 3d.

A Comparison between the Religious Toleration of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries—Rationalising Influences Within the Churches during Queen Victoria's Reign—Digression on the Passing Wave of Religious Reaction—On the Full Development of Rationalism Beyond the Churches during Queen Victoria's Reign.

ROBERTSON, JOHN M.—**Courses of Study.** viii.–516 pp.; cloth, 8s. 6d. net, by post 9s.

"An encyclopædic book by a well-known scholar, and likely to be of much value."—*Times.*

"Ought to be in the library of every student, and, indeed, of every person aspiring to knowledge."—*Leicester Mercury.*

"Forms a valuable book of reference for reading men, and should have a place of its own in every well-stocked library."—*Scotsman.*

"The best book of its kind."—*London Opinion.*

—— **Christianity and Mythology.** xviii.–484 pp.; 8s. 6d. net, by post 9s.

"This magnificent work will be welcomed.....It is a reference library in itself upon the subjects with which it deals. The reading, the research, the critical comparisons shown, are a matter for envy and unbounded admiration."—*The Reformer.*

——**Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology.** xviii.–442 pp.; 8s. 6d. net, by post 9s.

"The book is of intense interest to the student of comparative religion, and it is marked by the industrious ability which has enabled Mr. Robertson to gain the ear of many who dissent widely from his views."—*Literary World.*

—— **A Short History of Christianity.** 400 pp.; cloth, 6s. net, by post 6s. 4d.

In this work the author endeavours to present dispassionately a coherent theory of the true origins of the Christian cult, and to explain its growth in terms of all the sociological elements of the case.

—— **Letters on Reasoning.** xxviii.–248 pp.; cloth, 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 10d.

—— **What to Read.** Suggestions for the Better Utilisation of Public Libraries. Strong paper cover, printed on best paper, 24 pp., 4d., by post 5d.

WATTS & CO., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

SMITH, H. W. (compiled by).—**Modern Thoughts on Religion and Culture.** 342 pp.; paper covers, 6d., by post 9d.

SPILLER, GUSTAV (Compiled by).—**Songs of Love and Duty for the Young.** 80 pp.; 8d. net, by post 9d.

Comprising 90 songs and two sets of responses—one on ethical ideas and duties, the other on the Sacred Books of the World. The book is in use in various Ethical Classes in London, the Leicester Secular Sunday school, etc.

VARIOUS WRITERS. —**Christianity and Rationalism on Trial.** The Christian Defences (which appeared in the *Clarion*) Answered. 96 pp.; 6d., by post 8d.; cloth 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

VAUGHAN, PERCY.—**Early Shelley Pamphlets.** 32 pp.; paper covers, 6d., by post 7d.

WATTS, CHARLES.—**The Miracles of Christian Belief.** A Reply to the Rev. Frank Ballard's *Miracles of Unbelief.* Paper covers, 6d. net, by post 7d.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 3d.

WHITTAKER, THOMAS.—**The Origins of Christianity.** With an Outline of Van Manen's Analysis of the Pauline Literature. Cloth, xvi.–216 pp.; 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 10d.

This work deals primarily with Professor van Manen's St. Paul. While much of the detail of the eminent critic's treatise is necessarily omitted, the expositor believes that enough evidence is put before the reader to justify the conclusion that not one of the epistles was written by St. Paul, the earliest of them (the Epistle to the Romans) dating from about the year 120 of the Christian era. In the Introduction this view is combined with the mythical theory regarding the origin of the Gospel story. The writer gives his adhesion to Mr. Robertson's view; but with the modification that, while Mr. Robertson leaves the date of origin of the belief in a quasi-historical Jesus indeterminate, reasons are stated (depending on the conclusions of Professor van Manen—who, however, does not himself adopt the mythical theory) for assigning it to the generation that followed the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in the year 70.

WRIGHT, FRANCES.—**On the Nature of Knowledge;** And Other Essays. 6d., by post 8d.

On the Nature of Knowledge—Free Inquiry—The More Important Divisions and Essentials of Knowledge—Religion—Morals—Opinions.

ZILWA, LUCIAN DE, M.B., B.Sc. (Lond.). —**Reason and Emotion in Relation to Conduct.** A Paper read before the Critical Society of University College, London. 2d., by post 2½d.

PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT of G. J. Holyoake (12 × 9½ inches; marginal measure 20½ × 15 inches) can be supplied, price 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 10d.

WATTS & CO., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

ALL LIBERAL THINKERS

WHO HAVE NOT ALREADY JOINED

THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED,

ARE EARNESTLY INVITED TO DO SO.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE R. P. A. is the veteran reformer and Rationalist George Jacob Holyoake, and among its Honorary Associates are the great scientists, Haeckel and Berthelot, together with Edward Clodd, John M. Robertson, F. J. Gould, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Dr. Stanton Coit, Dr. Washington Sullivan, and other noted pioneers of mental and moral progress.

THE OBJECTS OF THE R. P. A. are to stimulate the habits of reflection and inquiry, and the free exercise of individual intellect; to promote a rational system of secular education; to assist in publishing the works of capable thinkers, and in popularising the great discoveries of modern science and scholarship; to re-issue, in cheap form, notable books of a critical, philosophical, or ethical character; and generally to assert the supremacy of reason, as the natural and necessary means to all such knowledge and wisdom as man can achieve.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE R. P. A. can be secured by payment of an annual subscription of not less than 5s., renewable in January of each year. In addition to receiving current literature of the Association up to but not exceeding the value of their subscription, and acquiring a vote at all General Meetings, Members who are resident in the United Kingdom can borrow books from the Association's Lending Library through the post (*Rules* free, *Catalogue* 3d.), or can resort to the Reading Room at Nos. 5 & 6, Johnson's Court; while Social Gatherings of Members and their friends are arranged from time to time.

THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE R. P. A. are forwarded, as issued, to all Members, on account of their current year's subscriptions, unless directions to the contrary are given. Books are sent to all parts of the world post free. Members who prefer to receive books by request only can make their own selections from the notices of new publications which will be sent to them in due course.

FULL PARTICULARS OF THE R. P. A., including the latest Annual Report and any special information desired, can be had gratis by applying to the Secretary, Charles E. Hooper, 5 & 6, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

OVER 750,000 SOLD.

R.P.A. Cheap Reprints

(WITH PORTRAIT IN EACH CASE).

1. **HUXLEY'S LECTURES AND ESSAYS.** (A Selection.) With Autobiography.
2. **THE PIONEERS OF EVOLUTION.** By EDWARD CLODD.
3. **MODERN SCIENCE AND MODERN THOUGHT.** By SAMUEL LAING. With Illustrations.
4. **LITERATURE AND DOGMA.** By MATTHEW ARNOLD.
5. **THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE.** By PROFESSOR ERNST HAECKEL.
6. **EDUCATION: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical.** By HERBERT SPENCER.
7. **THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD.** By GRANT ALLEN.
8. **HUMAN ORIGINS.** By SAMUEL LAING.
9. **THE SERVICE OF MAN.** By J. COTTER MORISON.
10. **TYNDALL'S LECTURES AND ESSAYS.** (A Selection.)
11. **THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES.** By CHARLES DARWIN.
12. **EMERSON'S ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS.** With Introduction by DR. STANTON COIT.
13. **ON LIBERTY.** By J. S. MILL.
14. **THE STORY OF CREATION.** By EDWARD CLODD.
15. **AN AGNOSTIC'S APOLOGY.** By SIR LESLIE STEPHEN.
16. **THE LIFE OF JESUS.** By ERNEST RENAN.
17. **A MODERN ZOROASTRIAN.** By SAMUEL LAING.
18. **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HERBERT SPENCER.** By PROFESSOR W. H. HUDSON.
19. **THREE ESSAYS ON RELIGION.** By JOHN STUART MILL.
20. **THE CREED OF CHRISTENDOM.** By W. R. GREG. With an Introduction by Dr. W. R. WASHINGTON SULLIVAN.

6d. each, by post 8d.; Nos. 1 to 20 post free 10s.

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 may be had in cloth, 1s. each, by post 1s. 3d.; or the 16 post paid, 16s. (Extra for foreign postage.)

R. P. A. EXTRA SERIES.

1. **JESUS CHRIST:** His Apostles and Disciples in the Twentieth Century. By COUNT CAMILLE DE RENESSE.
2. **HAECKEL'S CRITICS ANSWERED.** By JOSEPH McCABE.
3. **SCIENCE AND SPECULATION.** By G. H. LEWES.
4. **NEW LIGHT ON OLD PROBLEMS.** Being Thoughts on Science, Theology, and Ethics. By JOHN WILSON, M.A.
5. **ETHICS OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS.** By C. T. GORHAM.
6. **A NEW CATECHISM.** By M. M. MANGASARIAN.

6d. each, by post 8d.; Cloth, 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

(The six post free, in paper covers, 3s.; cloth, 6s. Extra for foreign postage.)

AGENTS FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LTD.:

WATTS & CO., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

PRINTED BY WATTS AND CO., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.